

“Analyzing the “Leader-Laggard” dynamic in the context of EU
Environmental Policy: A Federal Perspective”

Volume 1

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explain and analyze the policy dynamics behind implementation patterns in multi-level policy settings using the EU as an example. It does so by examining the implementation of EU environmental policy in member states in light of the recent economic crisis. The analysis of implementation patterns in the EU seeks to provide an updated approach and an in-depth understanding of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic, namely the distinction between those states that are 'frontrunners' and 'laggards' in their environmental policy performance. The key issue captured is the various regulatory trends and policy outcomes at the EU level in terms of implementation performance. Two case studies one of a reputed 'leader' (UK) and one of traditional 'laggard' (Greece) are employed to better define and interpret this dynamic in practice. In this analysis, the use of federal theory as the main theoretical framework is very crucial for a contemporary theorization of implementation in the EU as a multi-level polity. Having the advantage that it is not dependent on a state-centric ontology, federalism provides an understanding of multi-level political relationships that are neither purely domestic nor purely international. Drawing on this analysis, the main findings show that the impact of economic crisis on environmental policy implementation was dependent on the economic level in member states, i.e. the less wealthy Southern member states performed worse than the richer Northern states. Moreover, there has been strong pressure in many states to relax environmental standards in the name of growth. A closer look at the case studies demonstrates that the issue of cost is very important. In this light, the pro-growth agenda is dominant considering the government priorities of the UK and Greece. Besides these factors, the better economic position, the well-functioning public administration, the strong administrative and institutional capacity of the state also allow the UK to better implement EU environmental policy in comparison to Greece. In this regard, the use of federal theory captures the importance of domestic political context in the implementation of EU environmental policy.

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Thesis Acronyms and Abbreviations

CSD	:	Commission on Sustainable Development
DG Environment	:	Environment Directorate-General
EAP	:	Environment Action Programme
EC	:	European Commission
EEA	:	European Environment Agency
EEC	:	European Economic Community
EU	:	European Union
IEEP	:	Institute for European Environmental Policy
IMPEL	:	European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law.
SEA	:	Single European Act
UK	:	United Kingdom
UNCED	:	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
V4	:	Visegrad Group
WSSD	:	World Summit on Sustainable Development

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Some have argued that the 2008 economic crisis¹ has put pressure on environmental policy in the name of economic growth² (see Antal and Van der Bergh, 2013; Geels, 2013; Lekakis and Kousis, 2013). In the midst of huge public deficits³ and the Euro-zone crisis⁴, many voices such as the European Commission or some member states (e.g. the UK and Poland) have pushed for a change of Europe's orientation to a more pro-growth agenda. Within this context, government and business actions at the national and EU level have seemingly placed pressure on environmental policy as something that is too costly within the current fiscal environment (ENDs Report, July 2012). That being said, some Eastern European states have complained many times about the rising cost of the environmental and climate policy. This thesis explores whether and how the fallout from the 2008 economic crisis has impacted upon environmental policy in the EU. In this regard, EU environmental policy and its implementation are the specific focus of the thesis as the transition to a more sustainable economy model as outlined in the highly-publicized Europe 2020 strategy. Against this backdrop, some of the main reasons for the use of a broader approach to implementation in this thesis are that the success or failure of individual policies do not provide insights into the wider administrative and social trends impacting on environmental policy implementation. As seen in the past and more recently,

¹ By definition, the economic crisis is referring to a situation in which the economy of a country or the EU, in this case, is subject to an unexpected downturn caused by a financial crisis, particularly, after the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2007 in the US. Access date: 22/2/2017, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/economic-crisis.html>, <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/economic%20crisis>

² Economic growth is referring to the increase in a country's productive capacity, as measured by comparing gross national product (GNP) in a year with the GNP in the previous year. This also includes the increase in the capital stock, technological developments, improvement in the quality and level of education and sustainable development. Date of access: 19/03/2017, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/economic-growth.html>

³ The public deficit, alternatively known as government deficit, reflects the difference or variation between revenues and outlays in a certain period of time. Date of access: 12/03/2017, <http://economictimes.india.com/definition/fiscal-deficit>

⁴ The European sovereign debt crisis broke out in 2008 with the collapse of the Iceland's banking system and spread out to the weaker economies of the southern European periphery due to high government debts. Date of access: 10/02/2017, <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-a-sovereign-debt-crisis-with-examples-3305748> and The Sovereign Debt Crisis – Placing a Curb on Growth, Anton Brender, Florence Pisani and Emile Gagna (2012), Center for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels, <https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/Sovereign%20Debt%20Crisis%20e-version.pdf>

specific policies such as air, nature conservation, water and waste management have been applied differently by the member states and produced different outcomes (EEA, 2015). For example, some studies have shown that the performance of a 'leader' or 'laggard' varies across a number of policy fields at given points in time (Lieberink et al., 2009; Knill et al., 2012). It is telling, though, that for some 'leader' states their environmental ambitions do not match with their policy outcomes despite their fame, while for the 'laggards' the opposite is true. A good example is Germany which is generally regarded as a 'leader' but has not always conformed to EU laws, such as their non-compliance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (see Börzel, 2000). Although Germany is 'leader' in energy efficient cars, they do not have a speed limit on highways. It is thus likely that a 'leader' state can be a 'laggard' in individual fields. Consequently, looking at economy-wide and country effects of the credit crunch and at individual policies can give a misleading picture of the broader patterns. From a more critical perspective, the 'leader-laggard' dynamic is the means that largely exemplifies these discrepancies among the member states as will be shown below. In this sense, EU environmental policy provides the context where successes and failures are linked to the implementation process and filtered through the performance (policy outputs and outcomes) of the member states.

1.1. EU Environmental Policy and the Economic Crisis

Environmental policy as Andrew Jordan (2001, 2008, 2012) explains in his seminal works has been one of the strong pillars and success stories of the EU since its establishment (Burns and Carter, 2013; EEA, 2015). Despite the lack of reference to the environment in the founding Treaty of the EU (1951), environmental policy emerged from a relative obscurity to a prominent pillar of EU policy (Haigh and Baldock, 1989; Hildebrand, 1992). The subsequent impact of successes then provided the grounds for more detailed and comprehensive developments culminating in the sophisticated and voluminous EU environmental policy frameworks seen in the 2000s (Jordan, 2012). The evolutionary progress of EU environmental policy has shown that amid many differences and disputes

a wide range of great policy achievements have been accomplished, namely: the increase of the 'acquis communautaire'⁵ with the adoption of a large number of environmental regulations and directives, the integration of the environment with other policy areas such as economy as a key component of the single market and sustainable growth, and the increase of environmental standards in almost all the member states with significant improvement of environmental protection and the public health of citizens (Connelly and Smith, 2003; Lenschow, 2005).

However, this is not to say that there have not been flaws or shortcomings in the development of EU environmental policy. Key challenges still remain in many environmental sectors, such as water and waste management, air pollution, nature, and resource conservation (EEA, 2015). That being said, the positive assessment of the EU's overall environmental performance⁶ over time accredits Europe as one of the most advanced systems of environmental protection worldwide. As a result, ambitious initiatives and long-term strategic plans have increased the EU's standing in international relations, thus making it a global leader in the promotion of a green agenda and progressive environmental policies (Jordan, 2012). In this context, the success of environmental policy seems to be strongly contested in the wake of the credit crunch⁷ (Lekakis and Kousis, 2013). It appears that economic uncertainty and fiscal instability have outstripped political developments with a clear dominance of the economic sphere in decision making. Under the weight of economic pressures, the outbreak of financial

⁵ Based on the definition of the European Parliament, 'the acquis is the body of common rights and obligations that are binding on all the EU member states. It is constantly evolving and comprises the content, principles and political objectives of the Treaties; legislation adopted pursuant to the Treaties and the case law of the Court of Justice; declarations and resolutions adopted by the Union; instruments under the Common Foreign and Security Policy; international agreements concluded by the Union and those entered into by the member states among themselves within the sphere of the Union's activities'. Date of access: 15/3/2017, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/acquis_en

⁶ By the term of performance, I refer to the assessment of the progress a country made in terms of meeting the environmental targets and international environmental commitments as set by the EU and its member states. In this thesis, the term of performance has a two-pronged approach. First, it is defined in terms of policy outputs, for example, how and in what way the transposition of a policy was executed by the member states. Second, it is characterized by the outcome, which means that the intent and content of the policy was delivered with success or failure.

⁷ A credit crunch is characterized as the economic condition in which investment capital seems very difficult to obtain. In this case, banks and investors are very cautious in lending funds to corporations, which consequently increase the price of debt products for borrowers. In the EU, the ensuing credit crunch made lending almost impossible for some countries like Greece due to low levels of solvency and high exposure to public debt. Date of access: 21/02/2017, [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/credit crunch](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/credit%20crunch)

crisis overtly called into question the existing status quo, the resulting cost of environmental policies and the prospects of the European integration project (Bowen and Stern, 2010). Consequently, the notions of economic competitiveness⁸ and state budgets⁹ forthrightly came into the spotlight (Burns and Tobin, 2016). The creation of an unstable political landscape amid many economic controversies essentially paved the way for further questioning of EU environmental policy by arguing that it has far exceeded its mission and already gone too far. For example, David Cameron, the former Prime Minister of the UK, called for a roll-back of EU environmental legislation as part of the renegotiation deal with the EU (ENDS Report, Jan-Feb 2013). Indicatively, the statements of other prominent politicians such as, the former United Kingdom Chancellor, George Osborne, are moving on the same wavelength:

"I do not want Britain to be a world leader in fighting climate change because the UK should not price itself out of international energy markets by placing too heavy an environmental burden on suppliers" (The Guardian, 28 September 2013).

Similarly, at the EU level, the joint statement of the 21st Meeting of the Ministers of Environment of the Visegrad Group¹⁰ countries, followed by similar statements from Bulgaria and Romania, was very scathing towards the 2030 Framework for the EU's climate change policy (2014). Reasonably, the above positions reflect a growing skepticism about the efficiency¹¹ of environmental policy. More explicitly, there is a clear intention not to bear additional financial burden considering the economic challenges and national circumstances in their regions. In this context, the pronouncement of the President of the European Commission comes as a corollary to formalize the strong

⁸ It is the capacity of a corporation or a nation to provide products and services that meet the quality standards of the local and world markets at prices that are competitive and offer sufficient returns on the resources employed or consumed in producing them. Date of access: 12/04/2017, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/competitiveness.html>

⁹ The State Budget is the analytical financial plan for the fiscal year which determines the means of financing and expenditures. Date of access: 17/03/2017, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/budget.html>

¹⁰ The Visegrad Group (also known as the "Visegrad Four" or simply "V4") consists of four countries of Central Europe, that is, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia that have common interest and goals in various areas in the context of the European integration project. Date of access: 13/07/2016, (For more information please see the official website of the Visegrad Group, <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/>).

¹¹ Efficiency means the comparison of what is actually produced or performed with what can be achieved. Date of access: 19/05/2017, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/efficiency.html>.

concerns over the impact of the economic crisis on the EU's competitiveness at the highest political and institutional level.

"My first priority as Commission President will be to strengthen Europe's competitiveness and to stimulate investment for the purpose of job creation. I intend to present, within the first three months of my mandate and in the context of the Europe 2020 review, an ambitious Jobs, Growth and Investment Package", (Jean-Claude Juncker, Head of the European Commission, in his political manifesto for the elections of the EU Commission on 15th July 2014).

Reasonably, the above quote serves as a 'signaling device' of the dominance of economic forces on the increasing competitiveness and economic activity to tackle unemployment without, however, explicit reference to the environment. However, it seems to deviate significantly from the long-term objectives of the EU.

"In 2050, we live well, within the planet's ecological limits. Our prosperity and healthy environment stem from an innovative, circular economy where nothing is wasted and where natural resources are managed sustainably, and biodiversity is protected, valued and restored in ways that enhance our society's resilience. Our low-carbon growth has long been decoupled from resource use, setting the pace for a safe and sustainable global society", (EC: Europe 2020).

In spite of the much-publicized and ambitious objectives of the EU - as seen above - with the declaration of Europe 2020, there is a strong sense of environmental backtracking. What looks to dominate in the political and public discourse is the worry and fear of a severe impact of the economic crisis on growth. The adoption of the 7th Environment Action Program (EAP) (see Chapter 2) essentially pledges the EU to a certain course by changing the current economic model to that of a green economy. On the other hand, many actions by the EU and European Commission (EC) appear to undermine these goals by adding further pressure on the existing environmental policies and future planning. An example of that is the introduction of the so-called 'REFIT' process¹², that

¹² The REFIT process (Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme) as part of the Commission's better regulation agenda focuses on simplifying EU law and reducing regulatory burdens, for the benefit of civil society, business and public authorities and attempts to make recommendations to the Commission, taking

is, the European Commission's Regulatory Fitness and Performance program. Its main action is to make EU law simpler and reduce regulatory costs, thus contributing to a clear, stable and predictable regulatory framework that supports growth and jobs. In other words, the main criticism lies in the review of environmental legislation within this programme and concerns the weakening of environmental policy in an attempt to decrease administrative and economic burdens.

Following this and considering the tight economic constraints faced by member states suffering from budget cuts, there is the question of whether they have the capacity or will to implement EU environmental policy in the frame of the 7th Environment Action Programme and Europe 2020 (Burns and Carter 2012). Although the economic crisis primarily brought to the fore the economic differences among the member states, a key factor that has not drawn so much attention is the actual capacity of the member states to 'download' and implement environmental policy efficiently. Arguably, the institutional and administrative capacity of the state combined with strong policy structures are a good indicator of success, but existing studies (Jordan, 1998; Knill and Lenschow, 1998; Skjaerseth and Wettstad, 2002; Liefferink et al., 2009) show that this is seen by a small number of member states usually the Nordic countries, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and the UK (see Chapter 2).

On the contrary, a large number of member states are still confronting many challenges in the workings of their state and public sector, particularly, those on the southern and eastern peripheries of Europe (Börzel, 2000; Knill et al., 2012). Simultaneously, strong political will is also a factor of great scientific interest but, more specifically, is dependent on the ambitions, aims, and priorities of each national government (see Chapter 2). Acknowledging that willingness alone is not enough and strong leadership skills are also required, this makes the task of implementation more difficult for those states that lack one or both. In this regard, those that are equipped with the above-mentioned elements are more likely to perform better and induce others into a 'competition' over efficient and correct implementation (Burns and Carter, 2012). By this means, the predominance of

into account suggestions made by citizens and interested parties. Date of access: 16/03/2017, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-891_en.htm

economics and fiscal measures as analyzed above under the guise of economic recovery and growth should not be overlooked.

In such a context, the relationship between the environment and economy is strongly tested. Considering that EU environmental policy has been through various stages since its official commencement in the 1970s, the outbreak of the economic crisis in 2008 has shaken that delicate balance by dispersing a fear of further dismantling of the body of EU environmental policy (Jordan et al., 2012; Jordan and Huitema, 2014) (see Chapter 2). Given these circumstances, it could be argued that the EU is more inclined to address fiscal consolidation and sovereign debts than dealing with issues of apparently less importance, such as the environment (Lekakis and Kousis 2013). On a more critical tone, although this behavior was heavily criticized, for the majority of member states it was quite understandable at the time as public budgeting was at the top of the agenda.

Given the diversity in the national economies and political culture of the 28 Member States, the adoption of a single approach to environmental policy has been and remains very difficult (Jordan 1999; Gehring 2006; Golub 2013). This is distinctly seen in the actions of member states such as Poland and the Eastern bloc countries generally, known as the V4 group, opposing the imposition of any environmental measures (Dangerfield, 2008). Likewise, the Southern member states in the vortex of severe economic problems were more concerned about fiscal consolidation thus making the discussion about environmental measures almost prohibitive (Lekakis and Kousis, 2013). In this context, the implementation of environmental policy in a multi-level or federalizing polity such as the EU becomes more challenging. The oxymoron is that the convergence of views of both the EU Commission and some member states about injecting a new economic impetus is at odds with the highly-publicized environmental strategies. Hence, the environment erroneously seems to gain the reputation of being a brake on growth while retreating under the pressure of a strict economic agenda in favour of economic growth. Consequently, implementation, against this backdrop, has a disproportionately heavy burden to carry entailing in practice with the degree of performance. As Andrew Jordan (1998:69) argues: *“Implementation lies at the 'sharp end' of the European Union (EU) environmental policy process. The success of the EU's policies must ultimately be judged*

by the impact they have on the ground but despite many institutional initiatives, poor implementation remains a fact of life in Europe”.

Simultaneously, implementation, as will be analyzed below, has always been a vexed issue, particularly for political reasons, and is frequently considered as the poor relation of policy analysis (Jordan, 1999). One might, reasonably, argue that implementation and policy making are separate and do not interact with each other. In an attempt to avoid generalizations or misconceptions, I argue that implementation may be affected by policy making and constitutes the cornerstone of EU environmental policy because the progress and success of policies lie in the efficient application by the relevant stakeholders (Jordan and Liefferink, 2004). What makes implementation even more important for this thesis is the fact that in the past the evaluation of the EU environmental policy was largely based on the amount of legislation adopted rather than the degree of effectiveness¹³ of environmental issues (Jordan 1999; Börzel, 2000; Liefferink et al., 2009). This key difference substantially explains the dominant political symbolism and the different treatment and responsiveness of the previous years on environmental problems. The gradual shift from isolated to more integrated approaches comes at a cost that any setbacks or piecemeal approaches occurred bring about delays and significant impact on the overarching aim of integration (Jordan 2009). Indicatively, the conditions shaped after the outbreak of the economic crisis showed great variance (Knill et al., 2012). Hence, one of the main objectives of this research is to illuminate this variance on the basis of different implementation patterns by the member states in light of the economic crisis.

Given that implementation is a complex process, unsurprisingly, the advent of the economic crisis has made it even more difficult for some member states (Knill et al., 2012; Lekakis and Kousis, 2013). Undoubtedly, different dynamics emerge over the pace of implementation of environmental policies between the state and non-state actors at the domestic and supranational level (Liefferink et al., 2009; Knill et al., 2012). This is clearly seen in the cases of Southern and Eastern member states that have been most heavily

¹³ It means the extent to which goals are met and the extent to which problems are solved. Alternatively, this is the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result. In comparison to efficiency, effectiveness is not defined in terms of costs. Date of access: 19/05/2017, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/effectiveness.html>

hit by the economic crisis. As a result, austerity has seemingly put more pressure on administrations to cope with policy implementation. Additionally, in many cases, stark opposition and purported high costs in states, such as in Greece, have been influential in shaping the implementation deficit (Heritier, 1996; Börzel, 2003). In the same context, apart from the economic factors, administrative and institutional incapacity through the public administration played a key role. A general assumption is that correct implementation is dependent on a nexus of different endogenous (economic condition and costs, organizational and administrative capacity, and environmental awareness) and exogenous factors (transboundary environmental problems, internal market, and international treaties and conventions) (see Chapter 5 and 6). Therefore, there is a strong belief that further improvement and strengthening is necessary (IEEP, 2012; EEA, 2015; IMPEL, 2015).

By outlining some of the general traits of implementation above I aim to make clear that the main subject of study explored will be the implementation of EU Environmental policy after the advent of economic crisis, namely, seeking below to explain how this fits into wider implementation studies, to provide some definitions of implementation and implementation deficit, and to explain its utility in the context of this thesis.

1.2. Implementation Research

Outlining the condition of EU environmental policy, one might question whether and to what extent implementation can remain unaffected by all these rapid developments at political and economic level. On the grounds of a more contemporary theorization and for the purpose of this thesis, I give a brief analysis here on the different waves and schools of thought that have affected the implementation studies. The definition I provide for implementation originates from the wide and rich literature characterized as a process where interplay between the various actors (public administration, environmental agencies, political leadership) is vital and not only drastically affects the application of policies but also evaluates the policy outputs and outcomes of EU policies. In doing so, I seek to look into the underlying causes and factors of implementation deficit or failure that

plague member states. Similarly, I attempt to elucidate performance not only as an economic term but one that is highly politicized which touches upon endogenous and exogenous factors. Henceforth, I will explain that implementation can be a domestic issue and member states undertake the implementation of policies in light of the economic crisis.

Research on implementation has been influenced by three disciplinary fields. More specifically, Regime theory, Europeanization research, and Implementation in policy studies have made significant contributions to explaining the different levels, the interplay among the actors and how they shape the process by setting out the theoretical context for the understanding of policy implementation.

1.2.1. Regime theories

Regime theory is concerned with environmental issues and also focuses on the affairs of power, interests, and knowledge in the shaping and operationalization of international regimes. Much of its literature is structured around the shaping, effectiveness, and changes of regimes (Andresen et al. 1995; Victor, 1998; Weiss and Jacobson, 2000; Hanf and Underdal, 2000; Miles et al., 2001; Breitmeier et al., 2006). First, scholars concentrated their efforts on the formation and emergence of regimes with a view to exploring the various problems arising on the international agenda and how actors reach agreements (Victor et al. 1998a; Breitmeier et al. 2006). Second, particular weight was attributed to the concept of effectiveness as a key dependent variable and third, there was an attempt to pinpoint and explain the changes occurring in regimes, along with the driving forces that affect their development across time. Some scholars such as Najam (1995), Victor et al., (1998a) and Andresen et al., (1995) characterized the domestic implementation of international obligations as a new topic until the mid-1990s. A renewed interest in the late 1990s brought to the fore the examination of the relationship between international agreements and domestic policies. In doing so, domestic policies gain significant recognition and become more centralized in explicating how international obligations can come into the fruition at the domestic level and shape actors' stances

(Hanf, 2000). A careful consideration of the nature of the problem along with costs and benefits; the power formation between the states; the nature of the agreements and its commitments, exogenous (economic and political) factors and public concern sought to highlight how effectiveness is influenced.

Overall, the domestic implementation of international regimes needed more subtle analysis (Andresen et al., 1995; Victor et al., 1998a: 8-15; Weiss and Jacobson, 2000). However, the analysis of the implementation of international agreements, institutional resources, and national politics are the two fields that receive the most attention. Particularly for the latter, national politics is a decisive factor in the correct application of policies. However, as Andresen et al., (1995) put forward, there is a tendency of disregarding the particularities of the national perspective. Notably, there has been a significant effort since the mid-1990s to point out some domestic factors regarding the implementation of the regimes such as the institutional capacity, participation, conflict and exogenous socio-political influence (Underdal & Hanf 2000; Weiss & Jacobson 2000; Miles et al., 2001).

1.2.2. Europeanization research

Following the historical development of European integration and the increased importance of the supranational level, Europeanization studies emphasized the implementation of community legislation. The milestone of this field is the concept of Europeanization which started to develop in the mid-1980s. According to Héritier (2001: 3), Europeanization is perceived as the process of influence that stems from decisions at the EU level. Correspondingly, Falkner et al., (2005) described it as the resulting domestic response to the issue of adjustment and change of the domestic framework of policies generated by legislative actions at the supranational level. For some others, such as Radaelli (2003), Europeanization is a process which institutionalizes policy paradigms, namely, the design and formulation of EU policies, that are determined at the EU level and from there are embodied in national policies.

The concept of Europeanization is used in this thesis to portray the permeation and incorporation of changes into the domestic framework by EU adaptation pressures. More explicitly, it casts light on the attempts and difficulties of the member states in 'downloading' EU environmental policy as policy recipients that have to be implemented according to the EU treaties. Similarly, this happens because a number of member states find themselves in a rather weak economic condition thus entailing more hindrances as regards to the level of responsiveness and compliance with the EU stipulations. Simultaneously, it also encompasses characteristics of structural change as Featherstone (2003a) aptly mentions. More specifically, this structural change essentially transforms the domestic policy practices and the institutional and administrative structures where the incorporation of EU policies is ensured (Héritier 2001: 1).

Starting from the mid-1980s, the study on the implementation gap set the foundations of a large-scale research to identify and tackle the causes of non-compliance as a policy output and look into the application of EU legislation (Knill and Lenschow, 1997). In this regard, there has been concerted action to interpret the impact of EU policies on the domestic policy framework as well as the variation and extent of domestic adjustment in the member states. A significant policy innovation is that apart from the practical effects induced on the member states, the EU is also considered as a polity within which implementation can be tested in order to enhance the existing knowledge and capture the main dynamics that ease or obstruct the application of policies. From this perspective, the examination of the EU as a multi-level polity and its inherent factors on the progress of implementation are of great interest to this thesis.

Based on the literature three waves are discerned. The first wave of implementation is reflected in a number of studies as more apolitical. However, for some scholars such as Mastenbroek (2005), this revealed a substantial absence of solid theoretical context. Therefore, the 'top-down' approach according to Falkner et al., (2005:15) serves the need to depict the effective organization and structure as well as the hierarchy that determines the chain of command and control. Admittedly, this viewpoint epitomizes the crucial role of national administrations in facilitating implementation along with their organizational and administrative shortcomings. The 'bottom-up' approach rests on the idea that

implementation actors and target groups can be integrated into the process of decision-making. More explicitly, the participation of domestic actors such as interest groups, sub-national authorities and parliaments can play a pivotal role and ease the implementation of policies by taking part in decision-making at the EU level Falkner et al., 2005).

The second wave since the late 1990s dealt with the politicization of implementation in the EU context by taking into account the adaptation costs. A dominant perception was that a failure by the member states to 'upload' their policy predilections and patterns at the EU level would induce increased opposition in the implementation process. Notions such as 'the goodness of fit' aimed to explicate the extent of resistance through the lens of compatibility between the EU and national institutional framework (Risse et al., 2001; Börzel, 2003). However, some of the critiques are centered on its restricted interpretive merit due to the fact that pressures provoked by the EU policies hinge on whether national actors seek to change or retain the current system irrespective of the level of fit or misfit of the domestic structures.

In the third wave, the intricacy of national politics is more crystallized and provides a more detailed account of compliance as a policy output and how member states can meet the European requirements. Views such as of Héritier et al., (2001) reasonably give a more nuanced analysis by portraying the EU policies as an input in the national policy procedures. Therefore, domestic reform capacity is seen as a driving force for the policy implementation that relies on the existence of a strong political leadership to prompt or stall changes. Alongside this, another interesting view expressed by some other scholars (Haverland, 2003) is the mobilization of domestic political parties, public administration and civil society which may affect the implementation of policies. The analysis of Risse et al., (2001) practically combines the two main arguments stated above following a three-step process where Europeanization, 'goodness of fit' and mediating factors influence policy implementation. In this sense, Europeanization is presented as an institution-building procedure at the supranational level having set up a rich institutional context including regulations, laws, and processes for particular policy fields. The extent of compatibility between the domestic and supranational structures, unavoidably, determines the adaptation pressures. However, domestic characteristics seem to have a

strong influence in the formation of policy outcomes. This is corroborated by the fact that each state faces different difficulties and needs thus making domestic adaptation very challenging.

On the other hand, despite the explanatory framework provided as to what extent EU affects the national systems, Radaelli (2003) puts forward a rather more assertive approach. He stated that the machinery that seeks to interpret Europeanization is at a premature level. Hence, there are two main challenges arising from Europeanization studies. Greater emphasis on the issue of policy outcomes is required due to the involvement of different stakeholders and manifoldness of actions, and a more transcendent and inclusive research is necessary to more accurately illustrate the interplay and causes (Falkner et al., 2005; Sverdrup, 2005). One of the goals of this thesis is to address these two challenges explaining the potential policy outcomes in tandem with outputs and construing the nexus of actors and causes that lead to implementation deficit.

1.2.3. Implementation in policy studies

Implementation lies at the crossroads of various policy fields such as public administration and management and organizational theory (Parsons, 2003). To better understand the evolution of implementation studies, the distinction of the three different generations will give an outline of the main developments through time (Pülzl and Treib, 2007). Implementation was ignored by policy studies due to the fact that it is not closely related to a procedure where policy decisions were executed ipso facto and desirably by the central administration (Younis & Davidson 1990: 4). The emergence of implementation studies back in the 1970s, primarily in the US, was a response to the increasing concerns on the issue of effectiveness targeted at a set of reform programs. By the end of the 1960s, the dominant perception was that implementation was dependent on the intentions of decision makers (Parsons, 2003). The attempt towards a more inclusive consideration, such as 'translating policy into action' based on the analysis of Barrett (2004: 251), offered a new opportunity in the study of this field given that policies appeared to fall short of

policy plans, ambitions, and expectations. Against this backdrop, the first generation of implementation studies culminating during the 1970s was depicted by a rather pessimistic tone. This bleak picture was underpinned by an array of examples that led to implementation failure. The main exponents of this period that pointed out the main shortcomings and weaknesses in their seminal work are Derthick (1972), Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) and Bardach (1977). The approach of Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) essentially set the modern foundations of a more critical analysis and triggered a new interest by increasing the existing body of literature. Interestingly, prior studies perhaps did not highlight its importance so much. Furthermore, Jenkins (1978: 203) and Hupe (2003) described implementation as a process of change emphasizing how this can be provoked and take place. For some scholars, such as Hargrove (1983), the avoidance or negligence of making such links essentially kept the value of this interplay in the shadows thus presenting a gap in analysis and research. Overall, the aim of the first generation was to raise awareness and express the need for other approaches in the academic environment and public sphere.

Given the above context, it could be said that theory building was not an overarching purpose of the first generation but there was a serious attempt in the second generation with the employment of more advanced theoretical contexts to address that issue. It is telling that many of the debates are defined by a strong nuance of how the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' perspectives can be used to explain the implementation study. The separation of these schools of thought brought to the fore how the execution of implementation should be made. The 'top-down' model was mainly expressed by scholars such as Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), Nakamura and Smallwood (1980), Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) with the use of a more hierarchical model, that is, the exercise of policy intentions that are determined at the central level. Simultaneously, the 'bottom-up' model articulated a different form of reasoning with a particular focus on the issue of implementation as part of an ordinary action plan to problem-solving such as the "street-level bureaucrats". The main proponents of this model were scholars such as Lipsky (1971, 1980), Ingram (1977), Elmore (1980), Hjern and Hull (1982). As a more intermediate link, the third generation sought to identify and fill the gaps between the two models by encompassing the main features of both schools of thought in its theoretical frame. Moreover, this paved the way

to formulate a slightly different approach manifesting its more scientific character in comparison with the other two generations (Goggin et al., 1990). According to Pülzl and Treib, (2007: 90) *'third-generation scholars thus lay much emphasis on specifying clear hypotheses, finding proper operationalizations and producing adequate empirical observations to test these hypotheses.'* Nevertheless, scholars such as DeLeon (1999) and O'Toole (2000) argued that only a limited number of studies have based their analyses on that pattern.

1.2.4. Implementation in this thesis

The summary of the main models presented above offers distinct insights into the study of implementation. More explicitly, my analysis on implementation in this thesis builds more on the traditions of Europeanization by explaining how the member states 'download' policies from the EU to the national level through the 'top-down' model. The study of implementation of EU Environmental policy during the economic crisis fits very well into that school of thought because it gives me the opportunity as researcher to investigate the manifoldness and operation of a multi-level polity such as the EU, the relationship and interactions between the national and supranational level, the adaptation pressures induced by the EU to the domestic framework, and the degree of compatibility 'goodness of fit', as well as the capacity of domestic actors (member states) and public administration in the application of policies. Accordingly, I refer to implementation as the process of transposing, imposing and applying the community law at the domestic level by the member states as dictated by the relevant EU treaties. More specifically, this process shows that policies are initiated at the EU level but it is the responsibility of the member states to implement them. Concurrently, the nature of these policies and directives lies in general but not exclusive frameworks providing high flexibility in the means by which targets are met. Therefore, at this stage, there are two critical points worth a mention. First, I explain implementation in terms of policy outputs, that is, the actions that the national governments actually follow, such as transposition¹⁴,

¹⁴ It is the incorporation of EU directives into an EU country's national legislation. Date of access: 04/05/2017, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3A122021>

conformity¹⁵, enforcement¹⁶ and application¹⁷ of EU policies at the domestic level. More explicitly, I seek to define how and in which way policies are executed and applied by the member states. Second, I refer to policy outcomes as the results that are caused by the outputs or the condition which demonstrates whether a policy has been successfully implemented or failed to meet the targets agreed at the EU level. In simple words, policy outcomes regard environmental quality. Additionally, by the term of implementation deficit, I focus on the policy failures or weaknesses of the member states in terms of achieving specific policy outcomes and complying with the EU requirements and legislation. Given that the existing literature and many studies attribute particular weight to the administrative character and capacity of the state machinery for the policy implementation (Knill, 1998; Jordan 1999, 2001, 2012; Börzel 2000; Knill and Lenschow, 2001, 2005; Liefferink and Jordan 2005; Hill and Knill, 2006), from the empirical evidence in this research I demonstrate that implementation is not simply a mechanistic legal process but is in many instances, a big financial and political process for the member states (see also Knill and Lenschow, 2001; Jordan, 2012). More explicitly, it is a financial process that includes internal and external costs. For example, high costs of implementation are likely to be more of a problem for countries with smaller economies or bigger debts such as Greece. Likewise, it is a complicated political process that demands strong political and administrative capacity. Countries that have political stability, strong will and political leadership as well as strong public administration, usually the Nordic countries (see Liefferink and Andersen, 1998; Jordan and Lenschow, 2000; Knill et al., 2012), are more likely to implement more efficiently policies. Between these two, the human dimension is also very critical. That is an exchange of experience, best practices, skills, learning, and understanding of implementation actors (see also Jordan 1999, 2002; Knill and Lenschow 2001; Wilson and Buller, 2001; Skjærseth and Wettstad, 2002; Thomson et al., 2007; Knill et al., 2012).

¹⁵ It is compliance with the EU rules, laws and standards. Date of access:19/05/2017, http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/content/tips/words-style/jargon-alternatives_en.htm

¹⁶ The act of imposing observance of or compliance with a law, rule, or obligation. Date of access:19/05/2017, http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/content/tips/words-style/jargon-alternatives_en.htm

¹⁷ It is the action of putting, for example, a law or policy into operation. Date of access:19/05/2017, http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/content/tips/words-style/jargon-alternatives_en.htm

1.3. 'Leader-Laggard' dynamic and federalist explanations

The analysis of the main developments of the implementation studies and the main approach of this thesis above will help us understand with clarity some of the implementation challenges during the economic crisis. However, the study of implementation indisputably - as seen above - cannot ignore or dismiss the basic component of this analysis, that is, the performance as policy outputs and outcomes of the member states at the international level. Within the context of Europe 2020, the debate on the 'leader-laggard' dynamics of environmental policy has become very meaningful. In light of costs, many of the weak performers and implementers of EU environmental policy, as the countries who have been most affected by Europe's economic problems, are under severe pressure to weaken environmental plans, actions, and legislation. This condition would suggest that the EU may struggle to meet the Europe 2020 targets of a competitive environmental growth on the back of environmental sustainability and low carbon growth.

In this context, the 'leader-laggard' dynamic is the means or the vehicle to help analyze these developments both at national and supranational level under the condition of a systematic classification. In a general sense, the 'leader-laggard' dynamic could be said to be derived from the Europeanization research, as a comparative evaluation of the degree and speed of adoption and implementation of EU Environmental policies by the member states at the international level (Liefferink et al., 2009) (see also the discussion on implementation above in this chapter). Therefore, it follows a comparative approach on the overall trend of the adoption and implementation of specific environmental tools and policies across time (Andersen and Liefferink, 1997; Knill et al., 2012). More specifically, 'leaders' are the member states that have progressive environmental policies at the domestic level seeking to upgrade their domestic policies to the EU level and induce a regulatory competition. This also means that they are good implementers and can introduce effective policies by adopting innovative approaches (Jänicke, 2005). On the other hand, 'laggards' are those member states that fall behind with their environmental policy targets due to systemic institutional weaknesses and implementation failures (Börzel 2000). The classification of 'leaders' and 'laggards' rests mainly on the analysis

of the amount of environmental legislation adopted, the strictness of the regulatory framework, policy innovations, implementation deficits and policy outputs by the member states at the EU or international level (Lieberink et al., 2009; Knill et al., 2012).

Given the economic downturn, the 'leader-laggard' dynamic operates as a channel for further investigation on the ongoing controversy regarding the EU environmental policy implementation patterns since the 1970s. Although the 'leader-laggard' debate contributes greatly to a better understanding of EU environmental policy, it exhibits some big gaps in terms of a more contemporary theorization (see Chapter 2). A large part of the literature is outdated and includes descriptive accounts based on assumptions which have not fully considered the changing context, structure, and priorities of the EU that occurred after 2000 and particularly after the advent of the economic crisis (2008). The traditional perception includes aspects such as 'The Mediterranean Syndrome', which depict weak environmental policy implementation as a general phenomenon of a regional area (La Spina and Sciortino, 1993). However, this approach contains generalizations and stereotypical perceptions of specific EU regions based on old-fashioned studies mainly conducted in the 1990s (La Spina and Sciortino, 1993). In a wider sense, the majority of the European states are confronted with compliance problems in many policy areas, even those with advanced domestic structures and progressive environmental policies (Lieberink and Andersen, 1998; Jordan, 2000; Börzel, 2003; Jänicke, 2005; Wurzel, 2008).

In this light, this thesis argues that the theorization of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic finds a more interesting expression in the face of federalism as the theory which more explicitly describes the current form of the EU as a system of multi-level governance (see Chapter 3). Concurrently, the federal theory has the advantage and ability to identify, interpret and analyze the existing regulatory and implementation trends as well as the relation and interactions between the two levels - in this case - the EU and its member states. The rebirth of federalism in the last decades has introduced a different way of thinking about and analyzing the EU as a binary system with clear competencies. According to Jan Erk (2006: 4) *"federalism has experienced a remarkable renaissance in the recent decades, as an alternative way to accommodate ethnic differences, as a way to combat remote,*

undemocratic, and ineffective central governments, and lastly as a way to bring together members of the European Union". Although the theories of Intergovernmentalism and Neofunctionalism provide a good account of EU policy making and integration, they have in fact been criticized for failing to explain the EU as a multi-level system of governance in terms of distribution of powers, task allocation between the national and supranational level and, ultimately, policy implementation (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Bache and Flinders, 2004; Benson and Jordan, 2011) (see Chapter 3).

This assumption is distinctly reflected in the seminal work of Börzel and Hosli (2002:5), *"The EU may be described as a system of multi-level governance, where sovereignty rights are shared and divided between supranational, national, and subnational institutions. While traditional theories of International Relations and European integration have difficulties in capturing the multi-level nature of the emerging European polity, the constitutional language of federalism appears to be helpful in order to analyze and discuss the ways in which the division of power is organized among the different levels of government in the EU"*.

According to some other scholars (Sbragia, 1993; Nicolaidis and Howse, 2001) federalism is a strong theoretical and interpretative tool in the examination of EU integration, particularly as a step forward for those who consider the notion of the nation-state as the foundation of the international system (see Chapter 3). Similarly, as Quermonne (2001) contends the federal perspective is a critical pathway for those who aim to explain the dynamics between the domestic and supranational levels of governance. A direct link emerges between federalism and the implementation theories (Europeanization) according to the above description. Federalism seeks also to explicate not only the distribution of power but also the relations and interactions at both levels with a specific focus on policy making and implementation. In a sense, this theory gives a clear understanding of how the idea of a de-territorialized political plan affects the relationship with the traditional nation-states as well as the shaping of interests in view of new political developments (Lequesne, 2004).

Considering that a number of scholars (Hooghe, 1996; Marks et al., 1996b; Armstrong and Bulmer, 1998; Kohler-Koch and Larat, 2009) see in the EU a model that is beyond

the state-centric approach surrounded by multiple driving forces and interests, they arguably highlight the gradual abandonment of exclusiveness and supremacy of the nation-state. Likewise, as Ackerman (1997) argues, federalism is not constrained to a state-centric analysis on the distribution of power between the centre and the constituent units. Therefore, it encompasses the study of a procedure where the centre has a dominant role and seeks to build special relations with the constituent units. Drawing on that idea, EU policy making is subject to broader collaborations between the EU institutions, member states, and interest groups. Through the lens of governance, a shift of problems and decisions from the domestic level to the EU emerges. A similar interpretation given by Chang (2005) suggests that federalism is focused on the process and ways the center and the constituent units interact and collaborate with each other over time. Lastly, a more precise explanation is provided by Benson and Jordan (2011) that stresses the evolution of federalism as a political practice, namely the means of adjusting the distribution of power in multi-level systems and a theoretical perspective whose aim is to illuminate integration and define its final stage within a more normative context.

Consequently, the theory of federalism seems to be a more comprehensive and well-suited to the contemporary demands of the EU as it successfully deals with the functional and peripheral role of political power in multi-level systems of governance. Similarly, it better interprets European integration under a more normative framework (see Chapter 3). In this regard, the current status of the EU is in a process of federalization with a vertical distribution ('top-down' process) of competences between the EU and member states which constitute significant elements for the consideration of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic (Auer, 2005; Lavdas and Chrysoschoou, 2007; Vogel et al., 2012). Hence, it may be argued that interaction between the actors at national and supranational level discloses the influence of the various endogenous and exogenous factors in the implementation of EU environmental policy (see Chapter 5 and 6). In a more nuanced analysis, the different types of federalism (cooperative, regulatory and fiscal) shed light on particular functions and parts of the EU which are deemed very important to understand European integration and the implementation of EU Environmental policy respectively (see Chapter 3 and 7).

More explicitly, cooperative federalism explains the relationship between the EU and member states through joint actions. It also focuses on how the competencies are distributed efficiently between the two levels by pointing out the importance of collaboration when implementing the environmental policy due to the existence of spillovers (Ellickson, 1979; Elazar, 1964, 1991; Inman and Rubinfeld, 1997; Sarnoff, 1997; Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Burgess, 2006; Benson and Jordan, 2011). Regulatory federalism examines how social, economic and environmental implications derive from different environmental standards and lead to politics of 'competence and discretion' between the two levels with the aid of ECJ to better policy implementation. Therefore, it analyzes the distribution of regulatory tasks, that is, the EU to set standards and the member states to choose the combination of tools to meet those standards (Bagnall, 1985; Hedge et al., 1991; Majone, 1992; Rodden, 2002; Kelemen, 2000, 2004, 2009). Finally, fiscal federalism deals with the vertical structure of the public sector by focusing on the operations and provision of fiscal instruments in terms of what tasks are best centralized or assigned to the decentralized levels of government to implement a policy due to different standards. It also investigates, in a normative context, the role of the different levels of government in optimizing well-being and achieving a high-quality provision of public services by reducing the fiscal imbalances between the jurisdictions through the use of intergovernmental grants. More specifically, this theory suggests that when market failures such as environmental degradation emerge the EU intervenes to rectify these problems by internalizing the externalities and helping financially (funding) the member states to implement the environmental policy (Musgrave, 1959; Obinger, et al. 2005; Ahmad and Brosio, 2006; Sellers and Lindstrom, 2007; Oates, 1999, 2005, 2008; Majocchi, 2008; Wildasin, 2008; Weingast, 2009). By this account, the theorization and analysis of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic through the different versions of federalism illuminates the distribution of powers in the EU, task allocation, and the endogenous and exogenous drivers of the environmental policy implementation in EU member states (see Chapter 3 and 7).

1.4. Aims and objectives

1.4.1. Aims

Given the above context, this thesis aims to re-examine the EU environmental policy and 'leader-laggard' dynamic since the 2008 economic crisis using a federal theory perspective. In doing so, it will provide insights into the feasibility of the EU's plans to link economic recovery to strong or high environmental standards as outlined in Europe 2020. Drawing on the interpretative context of the three federal approaches (cooperative, regulatory and fiscal) I will explain and evaluate the implementation of environmental policy in a multilevel system of governance, such as the EU.

1.4.2. Objectives

The main objectives of the thesis are to:

- 1) Map the environmental policy implementation patterns in EU member states and the 'leader-laggard' dynamic following the 2008 credit crunch.
- 2) Produce two in-depth case studies, in the context of the EU, on the environmental policy implementation including one purported 'leader' (UK) and one traditional 'laggard' (Greece).
- 3) Use federal theory perspectives to explore the influential factors shaping the 'Leader-Laggard' dynamic in EU environmental policy.
- 4) Use the theory of federalism for a more contemporary theorization of the EU.

1.5. Case Study Selection

In conducting social research, the case study approach is offered as one of the many ways of empirical inquiry (Seawright and Gerring, 2008; Yin, 2013). Alternative ways are mainly expressed through experiments, histories, surveys and archival information (Yin,

1994). The use of case studies has been very challenging in social sciences (George and Bennett, 2005). Despite the critiques of the case study as a research method, its contribution is very important to the knowledge of socio-political, individual, group, organizational and other issues (Simons, 2009; May, 2011). One of the main benefits of this approach is the production of wider inferences and generalizations on the dynamics and trends of the society (Stoecker, 1991; Harvey, 2010). Furthermore, the scope of this approach extends to many disciplines such as political science, sociology, psychology and economics (Gilgun, 1994; Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2002).

Different types of case studies help more accurately define the content of study according to several authors. Initially, Stake (1995) distinguishes them as intrinsic, instrumental or collective, Bassey (1999) as theory-seeking and theory-testing, story-telling, picture-drawing, and evaluative and Merriam (1988) based on their character as descriptive, interpretative, and evaluative. Similarly, Yin (1994), in the frame of evaluation research, discerns five categories, that is, explanatory, descriptive, illustrative, exploratory and 'meta-evaluation'. Of particular interest is the explanatory type, which seeks to interpret the causal links in real-life occasions. According to Helen Simons (2009), there are another three types of case studies: theory-led or theory-generated, evaluation and ethnographic. The selection of case studies is always a difficult process but a strong tool for a thorough study in comparative analyses which I will use in this thesis (George and Bennett, 2005; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007).

Many have argued (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Simons, 1996, 2009) that a case study research approach has provided valuable insights into the analysis of a phenomenon and specific context in the social sciences by bringing a kind of '*quiet methodological revolution*', as described by Denzin and Lincoln (1994: ix). Although a case study is basically determined by its uniqueness, namely the phenomenon being examined, the selection of method is relevant to that. However, the definition of a case study encounters a wide diversity of views across different disciplines (MacDonald and Walker, 1975; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Gomm et al., 2004). For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of Yin (1981, 1994, 2013) is preferred: "*A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the*

boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (1994: 13). For the majority of scholars and the author of this thesis, the selection of case studies has an intentional character. The type of case study employed is theory-testing aimed at providing a descriptive, interpretative and evaluative account of the ‘leader-laggard’ dynamic. Therefore, the selection of case studies has, for the conduction of this research, met the following basic criteria:

- First and foremost, to include two EU member states that fit to the descriptions of the existing literature as a purported ‘leader’ (UK) and a traditional ‘laggard’ (Greece) in EU environmental policy. While much of the literature is analyzing the ‘leaders’ and ‘laggards’, the primary goal is to test whether these characterizations are still valid in the recent economic crisis for Greece and the UK. Broadly, according to the ‘leader-laggard’ classification, the UK is quite often referred as ‘inbetweeners’ and Greece as a ‘laggard’ (see Chapter 2). Given that the main focus of this thesis is placed on implementation I only make the case for the UK being a ‘leader’ in this area as it has a very good reputation and record of compliance with EU policy and is seen as one of the best implementers (Jordan and Lenschow, 2009; Jordan, 1998, 2012). On the other hand, Greece does not deviate from the existing classification, which means that is well-positioned at the lower end of the ranking. This also shows that their poor implementation record reflects the structural, institutional, administrative and economic problems in complying with EU standards (see Chapter 2). Additionally, from a geographic point of view, Greece represents the Southern European region as less developed compared to the industrialized and rich North. The UK, as part of Central and Northern Europe shares more similar features with Germany and the Scandinavian countries regarding the level of economic prosperity, development, and organization. In this context, this thesis aims to present an in-depth and updated version of both countries.
- Second, to more accurately identify the discrepancies in implementation patterns focusing on policy outputs and outcomes. Given that the selected countries appear to have a different starting point as members of the EU, this gives the opportunity to explore the domestic dynamics, to capture the implementation trends and make

strong comparisons over their actual performance after a severe economic crisis that hit mostly the Southern periphery and to a lesser extent the other European regions.

- Third, to examine the endogenous and exogenous factors in EU member states that affect the implementation of policies and lead to implementation deficits. Consequently, particular weight is attributed to the role of national actors and practices for the correct application of policies including also the political, economic and cultural aspects

1.6. Outline of the chapters

To address the above-mentioned aims and objectives, the main structure of this thesis unfolds in the following way. Chapter Two reviews the existing literature on the ‘leader-laggard’ dynamic and the history of the EU Environmental Policy by providing a full explanatory context. More specifically, the first part analyzes the most important phases in the evolution of the EU environmental policy by separating them into three distinct periods. Then, the second part examines and clarifies the definition of the ‘leader-laggard’ dynamic, key characteristics, and its relation to EU environmental policy. In addition, an analytical account of the main features of each of these groups (‘leaders/laggards/in between’) is outlined. Finally, the implications of this research are analytically explained in order to substantiate the reasons for the study of policy implementation during the economic crisis.

Chapter Three constitutes the theoretical foundation of this thesis by analyzing the different theoretical perspectives on the EU and the ‘leader-laggard’ dynamic. Initially, a discussion of the traditional understandings of the EU through Intergovernmentalism and Neofunctionalism along with the main critiques is provided. The main scope is to highlight why these theories have, to a large extent, been unable to provide strong explanations on European integration and policy implementation in a multi-level governance system such as the EU. Consequently, this paves the way for the analysis of the federal theory as the theoretical basis for the thesis which can provide a more contemporary theorization

and explain more accurately the relations between the national and supranational level, distribution of power, task allocation and policy implementation with the aid of the three federal approaches (cooperative, regulatory and fiscal) upon which the discussion on the 'leader-laggard' dynamic takes place.

Chapter Four outlines the methodological approaches for the conduct of this research. The aim of this chapter is to deploy in detail all the research steps in data collection and analysis. The first section is concerned with the philosophical context of this study, that is, the influence of epistemological positions and critical realism in this study. After that, the second section explores elite interviewing and the different techniques used (e.g. semi-structured questionnaire and open-ended discussion) as the main method of this research. Following that the third and fourth part focus on the utility of the documentary analysis and descriptive statistics in the form of environmental infringements as complementary to elite interviews. The fifth section examines the data validity through the process of triangulation and other validation methods to enhance the reliability of the analysis. Finally, the importance of ethical considerations based on anonymity, confidentiality, and data protection are highlighted.

Chapter Five introduces the first set of empirical findings by developing and mapping out the broader implementation patterns of EU environmental policy after the financial crisis in 2008, - the first objective of this thesis. The main scope of this chapter is to illustrate, to what extent, the economic crisis has affected the implementation of environmental policy with the aid of 26 elite interviews, documentary analysis, and descriptive statistics (environmental infringements). Initially, it breaks down the policy outputs and outcomes at the EU level considering also additional factors. Next, it compares the above-mentioned policy outputs and outcomes with the policy outcomes at the level of EU member states. Thereafter, the distinction of endogenous and exogenous drivers takes as criterion the Member state level in order to more accurately capture and deploy the different dynamics in member states. Concluding, an evaluation of the EU implementation performance is provided.

Chapter Six presents the second set of empirical findings - the second objective of this thesis - by comparing a 'reputed' leader (UK) and a 'traditional' laggard (Greece) in the

implementation of EU environmental policy. The basic aim of this chapter is to shed light on the implementation patterns of each country and compare them in light of the economic crisis. First, to better understand the environmental background and framework of both countries, the historical context and relationship with the EU is given. Second, the analysis of policy outputs is based only on data from elite interviews and documentary analysis. Third, an analytical overview of the policy outcomes is given with the aid of descriptive statistics (environmental infringements). In this context, a comparative approach unfolds for the UK and Greece with the EU-average. Fourth, the assessment only of the endogenous drivers reveal the differences in implementation dynamics between the case studies. Fifth, a concise description of the implementation performance of the UK and Greece is deployed based on the aforementioned.

Chapter Seven provides the context of the theoretically informed discussion of the research findings on the basis of objectives 3 and 4 of this thesis. More explicitly, the use of the three federal approaches (cooperative, regulatory and fiscal) as the main theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3, tests the applicability of federalism in the study of the implementation of EU environmental policy during the economic crisis and checks whether the research findings and the 'leader-laggard' dynamic are compatible with the theory. Finally, a concise review and some basic reflections on the utility and the main critiques of federal approaches are developed focusing, simultaneously, on the gaps of the theory and two of the main research findings.

Chapter Eight as the final chapter offers the concluding remarks of this thesis. It starts with how the basic aims and objectives have been addressed throughout this research as outlined in the introduction. Following that the brief analysis on the understanding of the impact of the economic crisis reflects the political and economic challenges in the implementation of EU environmental policy. The summary of the main research findings aims to stress the importance and the theoretical value of this research in policy implementation and the study of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic during the economic crisis. With the inclusion of future research, alternative ways are suggested for the study of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic. Finally, it is evaluated the novelty and the contributions of this thesis to scientific knowledge in comparison to other studies.

Chapter 2 - The 'Leader-Laggard' Dynamic: A History of EU Environmental Policy

Introduction

Although the establishment of the EU in 1957 did not include any specific reference to the environment, the environmental policy did not take long to officially come to the fore. For many, the environmental policy is considered as one of the most rapidly growing policy areas of the EU that has led to high legislative and regulatory expansion, the adoption of various policy innovations and increase of the environmental standards (Knill and Lenschow, 2000; Carter, 2001; Wurzel and Connelly, 2010; Jordan, 2012; Holzinger and Sommerer, 2013). First, in this chapter, I will start off by deploying the historical context of the environmental policy and the different evolutionary phases. A detailed analysis of each period will provide a better insight and understanding of the gradual progress. Second, I will analyze the academic debate on the 'leader-laggard' dynamic, definitions, basic characteristics, current trends, various factors and actions of member states in EU environmental policy. Third, I will explain the 'Pull and Push' model, namely, the 'top-down' approach used in this thesis. Fourth, I shall develop the implications of this research.

2.1. Evolution of Environmental Policy

There are three important phases in the evolution of environmental policy in the EU (Jordan and Liefferink, 2004). Officially, the first phase commenced with the signing of the Treaty of Rome and the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) in the same year (1957) (Vogel, 1998). With the founding of the European Union (EU) there was no official context for developing environmental policies and laws, as well as no reference to the notion of the environment in the Treaty of Rome (1957) (Jordan, 1999, 2002). The Stockholm conference on Human Environment in 1972 was the last important

event of this period. The second phase was marked by the approval of the first Community Action Program on the environment in the Council of Ministers, which came into effect in 1973 and lasted until the end of 1985 with the adoption of the Single European Act (SEA). During the second phase, EU environmental policy started with limited legislative action. The third phase coincides with the confirmation of the SEA that came into force on the 1st July 1987 and continues until to date (Jordan, 2005).

The goal of the first period was focused on the harmonization of laws in order to abrogate the various trade barriers among member states (McCormick, 2003). Some observers assume as incidental the fact that the bulk of environmental legislation was adopted due to spillovers from the economic policy (Haigh and Baldock, 1989; Hildebrand, 1992). Although, Article 2 of the Treaty of Rome (1957) has referred to *'a harmonious development of economic activities, a continuous and balanced expansion, an increase in stability, an accelerated raising of the standard of living and closer relations between the states belonging to it'*, it led to vague interpretations of environmental policy implications, stressing only the aspects of improved standards of living and quality of life (Liefferink and Jordan, 2004). As a result, the main idea of environmental protection was promoted by those countries with a more sensitive approach to environmental issues and high domestic environmental standards. Between 1964 and 1975 a major legislative effort took place on the principle of prevention such as the excessive subsidization on the regeneration or incineration of used oil (Rehbinder and Steward, 1985). For the first time, a directive set a specific context concerning issues such as packaging, classification, and labeling of dangerous materials. There were only nine directives and one regulation which dealt with economic issues and *'the establishment or functioning of the common market'*, rather than environmental concerns. In a sense, the period prior to 1973 heralded many changes at the institutional and political level which will now be discussed (Jordan, 2002).

The second period of the environmental legislative action began in the early 1970s. The milestone of this period was the Paris Summit Conference on the 19th and 20th October 1972, in which the Commission launched the Community Action Programs on the environment (Jordan, 1999, 2000). The various Environment Action Programmes (EAPs) outlined the core of EU environmental policy, on the basis of the main aims, principles,

plans, measures and priorities for the strategic planning and management of the environment (Jordan and Lenschow, 2008). More explicitly, the first EAP aimed to improve the quality of the living conditions of people residing in the European Community (Knill and Lenschow, 2000; Jordan, 2002). The principle of preventive environmental action was prominent. The adoption of 11 principles (Prevention, Action at source, Integrated Pollution Control, Resource Conservation, High Level of Protection, Precaution, Appropriate Level of Action, Subsidiarity, Polluter pays, Environmental Policy Integration) reflected those overriding objectives (Weale et al., 2000). Given that the decade of the 1970s was considered as a very turbulent period with numerous environmental disasters in all over the world, in 1973, there was an attempt to consolidate the frame of environmental policy of the European Community through specific and relevant measures and actions (Zito, 2005). Similarly, public pressure played a key role in mobilizing national governments regarding the continuing degradation of the environment (Knill and Liefferink, 2007).

Following the first EAP, environmental protection gained significant recognition and became a key component of the political agenda (Wurzel, 2002, 2003). After having successfully completed the first EAP, it was high time and fertile ground for the development of the next action programs. The duration of the second EAP was from 1977 to 1981 (Jordan and Liefferink, 2004). The main scope was to continue on the path outlined by the previous EAP. Particular attention was paid to the notion of pollution and the rational management of natural resources. The third EAP was announced in 1982 and lasted until 1986 (Lenschow, 2000). The aim of that programme was to forestall the introduction of different environmental standards by the member states and lead to market distortions (Jordan, 2002). That action program was infused by the intake of new policy tools such as the environmental evaluation. The adoption of the articles 130r, 130s and 130t reinforced the formulation of environmental legislation (Connelly and Smith, 2003). The central theme of this action program was that environmental considerations have a great impact on other community policies such as agriculture, energy, industry and transport and vice versa (Jordan, 2002). By 1985, 40 directives, 8 decisions and 10 regulations on the environment had been adopted (Jordan, 2005).

The third phase of EC's environmental policy was known as the 'initiative phase', which commenced with the fourth EAP, from 1987 to 1992, with the notion of ecological modernization (McCormick, 2001; Baker, 2007). The fourth EAP was the continuation of the previous programs seeking to reinvigorate the structure and directions of environmental policy-making based on educational and technological advancements (Wurzel, 2003a,b). Moreover, the clear orientation towards integration of the main disciplines of agriculture, economy, society and industry, as emerged in the previous EAP, was seen necessary (Connelly and Smith, 2004). At the same time, the revision of the original Treaty of Rome predicted a potential enlargement of the Community. The form of the new Treaty was the subject of long discussions among different stakeholders (Weale et al., 2000). As a result, the main aim was the completion of the internal market under specific provisions and terms (Holzinger et al., 2006). This led to the birth of the Single European Act (SEA), which had an influential and prominent role in shaping the environmental policy. Under the SEA, the environmental policy of the European Community acquired more consistent legal features (Connelly and Smith, 2003). Dirk Vandermeesch (1987: 407) aptly recognizes the provisions and the aims of the SEA as the constitutional base of European environmental policy.

The SEA was signed on the 1st July 1987 and gave a new impetus in policy making by setting out the environmental protection as the overarching goal and key component of the Community's policies. In this context, new environmental directives and multilateral environmental agreements were formulated (Wurzel et al., 2013). The main institutional changes included the adoption of a qualified majority voting¹⁸ and co-operation procedure,¹⁹ along with the aim of the completion of the internal market (Wurzel 2008b, c). The new treaty also included some important provisions such as Article 130, which

¹⁸ Qualified majority (QM) regards the number of votes needed in the Council for a decision to be adopted when issues are discussed based on Article 16 of the Treaty on the European Union and Article 238 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Under the ordinary legislative procedure, the Council acts by QM, in co-decision with the Parliament.

¹⁹ The co-operation procedure allowed the European Parliament to affect a small section of lawmaking for the EU according to Article 252 TEC of the Nice Treaty. This procedure emanates from the Single European Act of 1987 but has been abolished by the Treaty of Lisbon. With the replacement of this procedure it introduced the co-decision and consultation processes instead. This procedure remained mostly in the area of economic and monetary policy. If the European Parliament suggested amendments to proposed EU laws, the Council was entitled to reject them only by a unanimous vote.

added a legal footing in environmental policy. Furthermore, Article 100a defined the details of harmonization in light of the internal market by qualified majority voting and those under Article 130s by a unanimous vote in the Council (Jordan and Lenschow, 2008). Also, it strengthened the idea of integration, *'Environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of other Community policies'* (Article 174). That meant that the formulation and implementation of the environmental policy were not separate but interlinked policy areas (Knill and Lenschow, 2000). Finally, there was a delegation of powers to the European Parliament to cooperate with the Environment Council in policy making (Lenschow, 2003).

The Treaty of Maastricht (1992) reinforced the Community's commitment to the promotion of sustainable development and environmental protection. Correspondingly, it sought to clarify that environmental protection should be incorporated into other EC policies by stressing the integration aspect. Qualified majority voting hereinafter was rendered the norm for environmental measures (Jordan and Liefferink, 2004). In a similar vein, the legislative capacities of the European Parliament were amplified through the co-decision procedure (Lenschow, 2005). Also, the rulings of the European Court of Justice played a key role in the effective enforcement of environmental legislation (Wasserfallen, 2010). Similarly, the allocation of funding was intended to assist in the capacity building and bridge the gap in terms of economic inequality among the member states (Bache and Andreou, 2013) (see fiscal federalism in Chapter 3 and 7). The task of promoting sustainable development and non-inflationary growth with respect to the environment was a very important aspect (Jordan, 2008). In addition to this, the adoption of the precautionary principle meant that *'preventive action should be taken, that environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay'* (Article 130r (2)). Equally important was the principle of subsidiarity²⁰, which defined the actions

²⁰ According to European Parliament (2016), in areas which do not fall within the Union's exclusive competence, the principle of subsidiarity, laid down in the Treaty on European Union, defines the circumstances in which it is preferable for action to be taken by the Union, rather than the member states. In other words, the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of proportionality govern the exercise of the EU's competences. In areas in which the European Union does not have exclusive competence, the principle of subsidiarity seeks to protect the capacity of the member states to take decisions and to take action, and authorizes intervention by the Union when the objectives of an action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the member states, but can be better achieved at Union level, 'by reason of the scale and

taken at the EU level in cases where national and local governments were unable to cooperate (see cooperative federalism in Chapter 3 and 7) (Begg, 2009; Schutze, 2009). Sustainable development has evolved gradually in the EU Treaties. Initially, this idea was voiced in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty and then in the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, calling for *'balanced and sustainable development of economic activities'* with the adoption of Environmental Policy Integration (Hopwood et al., 2005). The Amsterdam Treaty incorporated and made the idea of sustainable development as one of the basic objectives of the community (Jordan, 2002). Practically, it gained a salient position as a guiding principle for further integration. Afterward, the Treaty of Nice in 2000 confirmed that action. The draft treaty sought to establish a constitutional framework for Europe by promoting sustainable development (Carter, 2007). These amendments rendered sustainable development as the norm of EU's environmental policy (Baker and McCormick, 2004).

Environmental action between the years 1973 to 1992 was characterized by a 'top-down' approach (Vogel, 1998; Jordan, 2005). The emergence of environmental problems and the taking of measures at the EU level revealed the need of adopting further actions and setting new targets (Weale et al., 2000). The advent of the fifth EAP set the target of the integration of environmental protection with other governmental policies across all the levels of governance (Benson and Jordan, 2010). More explicitly, that EAP covered the period from 1993 to 2000 and coincided with the completion of the Rio Earth Summit, the aim of which was sustainable development (Connelly and Smith, 2003). Notably, the fifth EAP focused on economic growth as an instrument of environmental reforms during the period from 1992 to 2000 (Jordan and Liefferink, 2004). Being the main policy document for sustainable development went a step further by connecting the environmental protection and economic growth with common objectives. The short term and long-term objectives aimed for eco-efficiency for the benefit of European industry. The White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness, and Employment summarized the basic lines of a 'benign' development (Connelly and Smith, 2003). Thereafter, the Cardiff Process recognized the

effects of the proposed action'. The purpose of including a reference to the principle in the European Treaties is also to ensure that powers are exercised as close to the citizen as possible.

significance of sustainability indicators and control mechanisms in pursuit of sustainable development through specific sectoral integration strategies. In the same vein, the Lisbon Strategy in 2000 intended to make the EU one of the most dynamic and competitive economies in the world until 2010 (Knill and Liefferink, 2007).

The fifth EAP was also responsible for the promotion of the Agenda 21²¹ and UNCED agreements. In a broader context, this EAP marked a significant change in the content of EU environmental policy, reflecting clearly the sustainable target (Liefferink and Jordan, 2004). However, this seemed to deviate from the conventional way of legislative action by putting more emphasis on the principle of subsidiarity and shared responsibilities, deregulation and market-based policies (Begg, 2009; Wurzel and Connelly, 2011a, b). Subsequently, the concept of integration, namely the incorporation of the environment into the realms of growth and implementation, attributed particular weight to the objective of sustainable development (Jordan et al., 2003; Baker, 2007). This consisted of five main domains such as agriculture, energy, industry, transport, and tourism, along with a set of other issues such as climate change, acidification, nature and biodiversity, water resources, the urban environment, coastal zones and waste (Jordan and Liefferink, 2004). In a similar fashion, the next EAP recognized that sustainable development required a strong commitment primarily to policy coordination. In a broader frame, the sixth EAP was characterized by the principles of ecological modernization, that is, the disengagement of economic development from environmental degradation (Baker, 2007). Therefore, this action program was the result of the assessment of the fifth EAP, known as Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice extending from 2000 to 2010. The

²¹ On the basis of UNCED (1992), Agenda 21 is an inclusive action plan to be adopted at global, national and local level by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every field in which there is a human effect on the environment. Notably, Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Statement of principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests were signed by more than 178 Governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created in December 1992 to ensure effective follow-up of UNCED, to monitor and report on the implementation of the agreements at the local, national, regional and international levels. It was agreed that a five-year review of the Earth Summit's progress would be made in 1997 by the United Nations General Assembly meeting in a special session. The full implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Commitments to the Rio principles were strongly reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002.

evaluation of the fifth EAP demonstrated that the implementation of environmental policy was ineffective at both the EU and member states level (Jordan and Lenschow, 2008).

The 'implementation deficit', as it is known, is directly connected to the 'leader-laggard' dynamic, of which a more detailed analysis will follow below in this chapter (see also the definition in Chapter 1). Hence, the Commission committed itself to increasing pressure on member states for better implementation performance. Besides that, the adoption of voluntary agreements and the greening of markets regarding the production and consumption model induced environmental and economic gains (Jordan et al, 2007; Wurzel et al., 2013). Equally important was the significance of environmental information and awareness. With the beginning of the seventh EAP (2014-2020), the EU has officially laid down the targets of becoming a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy by 2020²², aided by policies and actions that have as a principal aim its transformation to a low carbon and resource efficient economy (EC: Europe 2020). Acknowledging that the sixth EAP Program was completed in July 2012, a significant part of its actions continues in the current EAP. The final review of the sixth action program has shown that although many benefits have been delivered for environmental policy, there are still important challenges in four areas: climate change; nature and biodiversity; environment and health and quality of life; and natural resources and waste.

Amid rapid changes at the global level, linked to overpopulation, urbanization and unsustainable use of natural resources, many risks by the ambitious objective of sustainable development are posed. In order to secure the long-term well-being of the EU, more efforts to effectively tackle these challenges are required. In this light, the EU has committed itself to achieving its priority objectives for 2020, accompanied by a strong environmental vision until 2050. The main rationale lies in setting a strong basis for the completion of sustainable investment and growth respectively (European Commission:

²² Europe 2020 is the European Union's ten-year jobs and growth strategy launched in 2010 by the European Commission under the presidency of José Manuel Barroso to deliver growth, that is smart through more effective investments in education, research and innovation; sustainable, to a decisive move towards a low-carbon economy; and inclusive, with a strong emphasis on job creation and poverty reduction. Although, the strategy is focused on five ambitious goals in the areas of employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction and climate/energy. Date of access: 10/08/2016, (For more information, please see the following report), <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020). Therefore, the seventh EAP is grounded in a set of plans and policies such as the Europe 2020 strategy, encompassing the EU's Climate and Energy Package, the Commission Communication on a Roadmap for moving to a low carbon economy in 2050, the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, the Roadmap to a Resource efficient Europe, the Innovation Union Flagship Initiative and the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development (European Commission: General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020:7). The three main objectives are the following. First, to protect, maintain and reinforce the natural capital of the EU; second, to make the EU a resource efficient, green and competitive low-carbon economy; and third, to secure prosperity and prevent the citizens of the EU from environmental pressures and health hazards. However, to help the EU meet these objectives, the effective implementation of environmental legislation is necessary.

Looking back and evaluating the overall performance of EU environmental policy, it is evident that, to date, a remarkable progress on the environmental legislation has been achieved (Jordan, 1999; Knill and Lenschow, 2000). The bulk of legislation and regulatory expansion adopted helped significantly the development and modernization of environmental policy. The introduction of more stringent standards and measures essentially highlighted the importance and desire to better address the growing environmental issues and problems (Jordan and Liefferink, 2004). In a broader frame, the European environmental policy was not based on a specific exemplar but had many intermittent and important stages of major changes that affected its evolutionary process. The progress achieved through the various EAPs added a more integrated way of action, with more sophisticated policies (Jordan and Lenschow, 2009).

2.2. 'Leader-Laggard' Dynamic

The basic features for the definition of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic lie in the differences between the member states in the set of adopted environmental tools and policies, the strength of the regulatory framework – including how efficiently a policy has been implemented - and the environmental outcomes generated (Knill et al., 2012). In this

sense, the normative definition of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic thus far has been the comparative evaluation and the extent of variations in the performance of countries and not the actual policy outputs (Börzel, 2000). The main reasoning of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic rests on the implications at the international level (Knill et al., 2012). The three-way relationship, more specifically, implies that 'leaders' seek to impose their higher standards through the European Commission and 'laggards' are faced with a weak implementation of EU environmental policy. According to the literature, the 'leader-laggard' dynamic would be characterized by the implications of the alterations in the efficiency and rapidity of environmental policies at the international level (Börzel, 2000; Liefferink et al., 2009; Knill et al., 2012). These variations in policy performance can be generated by an array of factors which are pertinent to multi-level governance systems, such as the implementation deficit and shifts in economic, political and social aspects, along with rapid change in environmental behavior (Liefferink et al., 2009) (see also the discussion of implementation in Chapter 1).

Interest in the 'leader-laggard' dynamic has drawn the attention of many scholars (Andersen and Liefferink, 1997; Börzel, 2003; Liefferink et al., 2009; Knill et al., 2012). The classical debate of 'leaders' and 'laggards' has its roots in the dawn of EU environmental policy. Despite the fact that a number of efforts were pursued to classify states according to their environmental performance, only a few have attempted to look at this pattern in terms of policy outputs (see Liefferink et al., 2009). The usual association of this dynamic with the implementation deficit shows a unilateral approach that springs mainly from the simple observation of the role of states at the international level and their implementation record (Knill et al., 2012). Although the 'leader-laggard' characterization is seen or assumed as a comparative approach and a regulatory trend over the implementation of environmental policy between states, it also includes the combination of environmental policy performance, that is, policy outputs and innovations that extend beyond the EU or international policy stipulations. The current classification of the existing literature implies a temporal dynamic which is more oriented to environmental performance (Knill et al., 2012).

When referring to 'leaders' or 'laggards' in EU environmental policy, this includes both individual and groups of countries. For instance, the literature on 'leader-laggard' dynamic singles out as 'leaders' countries such as Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Austria and the UK²³ (Börzel, 2003; Jänicke, 2005, Knill et al., 2012). Also, belonging to the same group are non-EU members Norway and Switzerland. On the other side, 'laggards' in environmental policy are Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain (Liefferink et al., 2009; Knill et al., 2012). In the middle of this condition, there is Belgium, France, and the UK (see footnote below) (Andersen and Liefferink, 1997a; Börzel, 2003). 'Leaders' and 'laggards' exercise varying degrees of pressure on the EU. The 'top-down' approach is the means of a broader understanding of this dynamic. The two-way relationship and interaction between the EU and 'leaders' and 'laggards' bring about many changes in the regulatory context and the implementation of policies across all member states. From a 'top-down' perspective, the 'downloading' of policy stemming from the EU finds the policy recipients, namely the member states, facing implementation difficulties and compliance issues due to public pressure, structural inefficiencies, administrative incapacity and high adaptation costs.

States may change their policy preferences over time depending on the political and economic circumstances, thus highlighting the instability and fluidity of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic. The behavioral change of a state may rest on the domestic or external pressures which formulate a specific political context. Being a 'leader' or 'laggard' has, by and large, been seen as a stable characteristic or static condition backed by outdated assessments and stereotypes in much of the existing literature. For example, recent studies have shown that the performance of a 'leader' or 'laggard' varies across a number of policy fields at given points in time (Knill et al., 2012). It is telling, though, that for some 'leader' states their environmental ambitions do not match with their policy outcomes despite their fame and the opposite for the 'laggards' respectively. A good example would be Germany, which although has, generally, the reputation of a 'leader', it has not always conformed to EU laws, such as their non-compliance with the Environmental Impact

²³ In some studies, the UK is characterized as 'leader' and others as 'inbetweeners'. In this research, I consider the UK as a purported 'leader' due to their very good record of compliance and implementation of EU policies.

Assessment Directive (see Börzel, 2000). In a similar fashion, while Germany is a 'leader' in the sector of energy efficient cars, they lack a speed limit on highways. It is, thus, likely that a 'leader' state can be a 'laggard' in individual fields. Consequently, some policy windows have emerged leading to the use of a particular approach and explain these reasons (Börzel, 2003; Jänicke, 2005). For example, the role of 'leader' encompasses strategic factors such as 'the will and skill' for a specific competence (Jänicke, 2005).

In a wider context, the lack of inclusive and in-depth empirical research and the study of specific case studies have created confusion and a blurred picture of this dynamic. This, however, reveals certain weaknesses in the objectivity and transparency as well as the measurement, of the samples (Crepaz, 1995; Jahn, 1998; Scruggs, 1999, 2003). Based on prior studies, it can be mentioned that each research has developed its own methodology and patterns to draw conclusions. Indicatively, the ranking of 'leaders' and 'laggards' has been underpinned by a more generalist approach in which environmental estimations are dominant over the actual performance (policy outputs and outcomes) of the states. The use of a wider range of qualitative and quantitative indicators and measures would explain more accurately the mobility of 'leaders' and 'laggards' based on actual policy outputs and outcomes and not only on the environmental ambitions or expectations as occurred in the past (Liefferink et al., 2009).

What is suggested by the current literature as a 'leader' is a condition in which a country in comparison with others within a specific period of time seeks to promote the strictest environmental policy whereby it can be a guide or pattern for emulation to other states (Jänicke, 1998, 2005; Liefferink et al., 2009). In this regard, those countries with higher environmental standards are inclined to engage with other states in a regulatory antagonism. This would mean that they aim to influence international regulation, introduce policy innovations and affect the implementation of policies as their 'downloading' is accompanied by fewer adaptation costs (Holzinger et al., 2008a, b; Knill et al., 2012). Conversely, a 'laggard' state in environmental policy seems to have comparatively lower expectations from other states within a specific time frame for the environmental protection (Knill et al., 2012). Similarly, it shows significant unwillingness and opposition over a more advanced regulatory framework and a sluggish interest in existing regulatory

tendencies due to high adaptation costs. This is also reflected in the selective application of policies, slow pace or deliberate avoidance. The low level of policy strictness, *inter alia*, affects the overall performance by exhibiting significant variability but it does not prevent improvements at a more advanced regulatory level.

2.3. Pull and Push Process

One of the most crucial points when considering the 'leader-laggard' dynamic is what processes and paths are followed. The relation of the EU with the member states is bidirectional based on interstate bargaining (Andersen and Liefferink, 1998). Member states are not only recipients of European calls for domestic change but also actively participate in the formation of various policies and procedures (Bomberg and Peterson, 2000). The necessity of domestic change and policy adaptation includes different types of pressure at both domestic and European levels (Cowless et al., 2001; Risse et al., 2001; Radaelli, 2003). The rationale of 'top-down' approach is used here to explain the actions of the member states in 'downloading' (implementation) policies (Börzel, 2003). A clearer view is provided by the cooperative and regulatory federalism in the theory section (see Chapter 3). At the national level, domestic actors pressurize their governments to push for policies at the EU level that are favorable to their interests. At European level, member states seek to promote policies that fit into the domestic pressures as well as reducing the implications at the national level (Risse et al., 2001; Börzel, 2003). Consequently, policy compliance is also intertwined with implementation costs which domestic actors are not willing to take on (Holzinger and Knill, 2008). This, however, may create additional problems for national governments as receivers of complaints regarding the costs of European policies imposed on them. Therefore, this is mainly seen through the lens of the degree of effectiveness of the implementation and compliance of European policies at the domestic level (Börzel and Risse, 2003; Falkner et al., 2008).

From a 'top-down' perspective, the impact of Europe is construed by 'the goodness of fit' and the intervening factors that differ across policies and member states (Börzel, 2003).

The 'goodness of fit' between the national and the European level defines the extent of pressure for adaptation caused by Europeanization on the member states (Risse et al., 2001). More specifically, the high degree of pressure for adaptation is dependent on the low extent of compatibility between the EU level and the existing domestic procedures, structures, and policies. There are two kinds of 'misfit' (Börzel, 1999) or 'mismatch' (Heritier, 1996) to member states. First, policy 'misfit' is caused by European regulations and domestic policies (Schmidt, 2001; Börzel, 2003) and, second, institutional 'misfit' is created by the domestic rules and processes opposed to the regional institutions, thus altering the collective understandings (Börzel, 2002b). Policy 'misfit' is gauged by taking into account EU policy and the respective domestic policy in tandem with the compatibility of their policy tools and patterns (Börzel, 2003). If these principles cannot be met, then it may lead to the imposition of costly adaptation measures, which unavoidably raise the administrative difficulties. Therefore, domestic change hinges on the action of domestic actors to push or hinder these policies (Börzel and Risse, 2003: 64).

2.4. 'Leaders'

One of the first questions arising when considering the 'leader-laggard' dynamic is what makes a country act as a 'leader'. Liefferink and Andersen (1998) developed a certain typology over the action of 'leader' states by pointing out that a 'leader' country is environmentally advanced at the domestic level, namely a step forward from the established EU environmental policy. More specifically, a 'leader' state has developed progressive policies for environmental protection. The strategy of 'pushing' is dominant and has either direct or indirect action in environmental policy-making by adopting market-based policies such as the Emissions Trading Scheme which makes, arguably, the implementation of policies easier as they are implementing their own standards (Jordan, 2002).

First, if a state acts as an intentional 'leader' and exerts pressure directly, it results in taking action on its own to affect EU environmental policy making. This is called 'pusher-by example'. In this context, Denmark is depicted as a good example in the introduction

of the CO₂ tax. Second, a member state becomes a 'leader' by gradually harnessing its domestic power without ignoring the EU procedures. Also, it affects environmental policy making by forging links with other countries or institutions, such as the European Commission (Jordan, 2002). This tactic is widely known as a creative pusher strategy, which focuses on trade-offs by considering EU environmental standards to be lower than the domestic ones. A good example is the wastewater management in Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands. Third, a member state opts to be a 'leader' intentionally by acting indirectly in EU policy-making and avoiding one-sided actions (Liefferink and Andersen, 1998). However, there is influence from other policy areas combined with internal market approaches. This type is referred to as a defensive 'leader' because the protection of the environment is a high priority for the member state but disregards the EU context. A typical example is a ban on the Danish bottle system by the European Commission (Jordan, 2002). Fourth, there is indirect action in EU environmental policy and the gradual development of 'leader' status. In a similar fashion as the previous type, strong domestic standards and the operation of the internal market may affect EU policy-making. When domestic standards are significantly below the EU average, some member states may opt out. An example of this category are the prohibitions of Germany and the Netherlands on wood preservative pentachlorophenol (PCP) (Andersen and Liefferink, 1998). From a 'top-down' perspective, they show good compliance with the EU stipulations and their implementation efficiency is comparatively higher as a consequence of better administrative structures, political and institutional capacity and economic condition to afford the adaptation costs (Holzinger and Knill, 2008).

According to this typology, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, and Austria and the UK are considered as 'leaders' in environmental policy, having stricter domestic standards, an advanced regulatory framework and a large industry (Jordan and Lenschow, 2000). By harnessing their environmental policy framework, they seek to introduce more rigorous environmental policies at the international arena as it facilitates the implementation of policies due to their own standards (Jacob and Volkery, 2004). Their advanced regulatory framework provides joint action between the state and the private sector for tackling trans-boundary issues such as pollution and environmental degradation (Busch et al., 2012). Furthermore, they have strong economic incentives to

defend their domestic industry and seek competitive advantage through generating technology and expertise known as 'best available technology' (Jänicke, 2005).

The existence of the EU institutions and various networks at the international level offers the opportunity for comparative evaluation on competitiveness in the environmental sector (Busch et al., 2012). That kind of competition may generate innovation through which small countries can gain significant economic benefits, such as extra funding sources through selling technology. The practice of policy innovation lies mostly in domestic factors such as the power of the 'green advocacy coalition' and the nexus of institutional, economic and informational factors (Sabatier, 1999; Jänicke, 2005; Liefferink et al., 2009). The effect of small countries like Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands on environmental policy shows that their role is more significant nowadays than before, given that sustainable growth is a key component of their economy with the development of a very promising environmental market (Andersen and Liefferink, 1997; Jänicke 2005). The advanced regulatory framework is a kind of safety net for the 'leaders' because it provides economic incentives and significant profits to the domestic industry for the generation of policy innovation. Simultaneously, it maintains the domestic regulatory style high with the prospect of preventing others from importing policy innovation and expertise from abroad (Eisner, 2007). In this context, the regulatory competition offers the opportunity to promote policies to the EU under the prism of more advanced and comprehensive environmental policies.

'Leader' countries are, in general, more economically developed. This is seen in the dynamics of national income and economic affluence coupled with a high level of education (Jacob and Volkery, 2004). The higher the degree of economic development, the greater the environmental awareness takes place (Jänicke, 2005). Based on that, it is more likely to form a better understanding of the problems. It could be argued that the complexity of environmental problems can be more efficiently evaluated by better-educated people as they have better managerial, financial, professional and technological skills (Börzel, 2000). Economic factors such as economic crises and political changes such as frequent elections or an overthrow of government may provoke significant instability (Jänicke, 2005). The advent of economic crisis (2008) showed that even very

developed and wealthy states have been quite hesitant in pushing and implementing further environmental policies because there is a perception that green issues imply additional costs, as seen below with the case of the UK. That being said, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne stated clearly:

"I am worried about the combined impact of the green policies adopted not just in Britain, but also by the European Union ... if we burden [British businesses] with endless social and environmental goals – however worthy in their own right – then not only will we not achieve those goals, but the businesses will fail, jobs will be lost, and our country will be poorer." (The Guardian, 2011)²⁴

2.5. 'Laggards'

'Laggards', on the other hand, are considered to be those states that fall behind in environmental policy (Börzel, 2003). In a sense, they demonstrate limited domestic political capacity which either just conform to the EU norms or fail to implement the agreed policies. Reasons cited in the literature for their poor performance include a weak capacity to implement policies because of a weak economy, less sophisticated public administration, lack of interest, or a more intentional obstruction to gain economic advantage through non-compliance (Pridham, 1994; Börzel, 2000). At the same time, the poor representation of green parties and the lack of environmental activism and awareness may be another factor shaping the 'laggards' performance (Börzel, 2000). Their poor implementation record reflects the need to receive financial support (side-payments, package deals or exemption) in order to advance their regulatory framework and actions and to reach the same level of EU policies as the other countries (see fiscal federalism in Chapter 3 and 7). In a broader classification, Portugal, Ireland/Italy, Greece and Spain are viewed as those countries that lag behind and deploy considerable gaps in environmental policy (Knill et al., 2012). These countries are reported to have a loose

²⁴ Date of access: 29/11/2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/nov/29/autumn-statement-george-osborne-green-policies>.

and weak regulatory framework that fails to meet the environmental standards set by the EU while demonstrating strong opposition to the adoption of more stringent standards (Holzinger and Knill, 2008). Consequently, the existence of stringent regulation may operate as a barrier. Under these terms, environmental protection may be seen as a brake on economic growth because the main objective remains the decrease of unemployment and job-creation. Furthermore, the building of new structures may entail higher costs. Consequently, non-compliance may be preferable and less costly in economic terms, for example by importing technology, knowledge, and expertise from abroad.

From a 'top-down' approach, the 'downloading' of policies from the EU to the national structures is estimated to be quite high in terms of economic cost (Holzinger et al., 2008a). In this regard, building up new structures and the application of an extensive set of domestic and structural changes necessitate significant costs giving the impression that the implementation of environmental measures is a very expensive procedure (Börzel, 2003). Additionally, there may be a significant impact by the legal and administrative inflexibility, the sluggish political interest and the lack of financial resources. Therefore, the high pressure for major institutional changes within a more advanced regulatory framework for the 'laggards' increases the chances of non-compliance with the EU requirements. (Liefferink et al., 2009). The partial or ineffective implementation of policies may dictate financial assistance to comply effectively. Finally, in light of severe economic conditions such as an economic crisis, 'laggards' may perceive the environmental framework as an additional cost or an imposition of power by the rich northern countries to the poorer southern states (Börzel, 2001).

It may be argued that the extent of compliance of many of the member states with the environmental legislation is quite far from the desired point, whereby considerable discrepancies have been noticed, particularly with Southern European member states (Börzel, 2000; Falkner et al., 2008). These countries are assumed to be confronted with chronic delays and systemic inadequacies in the implementation of environmental policy stemming from structural weaknesses and pathologies of their state apparatus (Pridham, 1996; Börzel, 2000; Knill et al., 2012). Some of the main reasons are focused on the administrative inefficiency and fragmentation of agencies that may cause lack of

coordination (Aguilar Fernandez, 1994; Börzel, 2003). Similarly, there is a lack of human resources, expertise and infrastructure in combination with weak economic growth, high rates of unemployment and strong economic interests (Pridham and Cini, 1994; Liefferink et al., 2009). Broadly, 'laggards' prioritize economic growth for tackling poverty and employability issues over environmental protection, which in a first reading translates into a very expensive policy. Equally important is the fact that environmental awareness and green movements have a weak presence and do not enjoy high recognition and support from the people (Börzel, 2000). Cliental practices, individualistic mindset, corruption, piecemeal and party prevalent culture are also considered to be key factors hampering the full compliance and effective implementation of environmental policy (Pridham, 1996; Börzel, 2003).

Of particular interest is the description given by some scholars with regard to the institutional and administrative shortcomings of these states on environmental protection, reported as the 'Mediterranean syndrome' (La Spina and Sciortino, 1993). On the one hand, this description reflects the various problems facing these countries; on the other hand, it shows a kind of bias and stereotypical approach possibly derived from the northern European states. It should not be omitted that sometimes the vague and complicated character of the EU policies may intensify the implementation problems of its member states and widen the imbalances among them. The discrepancies existing between the Mediterranean states bring to the fore the economic, cultural and political particularities of each state. Although the traditional perception is based on the idea that the political systems of Southern Europe are permeated by conservatism, cliental practices, and indifference to formal institutions, which may be true to some extent, this looks like more of a generalization and feeds into the reproduction of outdated analyses which ignore the anthropo-geography and socio-political conditions of the southern member states. Admittedly, some of these features are dominant in specific regions but not across all of the Mediterranean countries. This arguably strengthens the belief that the southern political culture is in direct conflict with the northern, as part of the different patterns in society, politics, and environmentalism (Liefferink et al., 2009).

2.6. 'In-between' or 'fence-sitters'

'In between' or 'fence-sitters' are those countries that neither pursue to introduce or push particular policies to the European level nor inhibit other states to proceed with it (Börzel, 2001). They primarily take a moderate stance, which is perceived as a passive condition. Their way of action and coalition building with other countries varies according to the circumstances and their national interests. France, Belgium, Italy and the United Kingdom²⁵ (see the selection of case studies in Chapter 1) belong in this group (Andersen and Liefferink, 1997:6). These states lack the motivation and capacity of 'leaders' and their regulatory framework combines elements of both 'leaders' and 'laggards' (Liefferink et al., 2009). This is mainly reflected in the process of 'downloading' European policies with lower costs of implementation (see regulatory federalism in Chapter 3 and 7). Furthermore, their industrial sector does not necessarily show particular competitive benefits from the adoption of stringent environmental measures (Knill et al., 2012). The lack of a specific action plan and vague policy preferences to a certain extent causes inertia and hesitation thus leading to a more neutral position (Börzel, 2003). States in the middle of this classification have considerable economic development, present a quite advanced regulatory context but have weak action capacity (Liefferink et al., 2009). In this vein, they seek to abstain from 'laggards' because they usually oppose European policies that are against their rationale for further integration. From a 'top-down' perspective, their implementation performance resembles the features of 'laggards' than of 'leaders'. The regulatory framework may be affected by strategic preferences and action capacity linked to the economic growth of the state. Moreover, they seek to diminish the cost of adaptation by avoiding the implementation of policies that bear high costs (Liefferink and Andersen, 1997; Börzel, 2000).

²⁵ In some studies, the UK is characterized as 'leader' and others as 'inbetweeners'. In this research, I consider the UK as a purported 'leader' due to their very good record of compliance and implementation of EU policies.

2.7. Implications for this research

The approach taken for this thesis aims to add and build upon the existing literature for two main reasons. It seeks to consider the 'leader-laggard' dynamic under a more contemporary prism by focusing on the period of economic crisis and its impact on the implementation of environmental policy in EU member states. The existing research includes studies that have used a number of different methodological approaches but have mainly drawn on 'leader-laggard' conceptualizations first outlined in the 1990s. But how do these conceptualizations hold up in the modern EU which is still dealing with the impact of the economic crisis?

The main focus of this thesis is on the implementation of EU environmental policy as it turns out to be the most obvious effect of the economic crisis, followed by the lack of will for further environmental measures due to perceived costs. There are also other academic reasons for this focus such as the need to investigate the policy outputs and outcomes along with the main drivers at the domestic and supranational level affecting the implementation of environmental policies. In the same vein, considering that EU Environmental policy has been greatly characterized as a success story, the economic crisis provides the opportunity to test in practice the applicability of this policy amid strong economic pressures and financial uncertainty.

In such a context, implementation is a key factor that not only defines how a member state performs but also contributes to the overall performance of the EU. Hence this thesis seeks to map the broader patterns of environmental policy 'leaders' and 'laggards' (objective 1) in the EU and provide two in-depth case studies (objective 2) in light of the 2008 economic crisis. Second, it seeks to give a more thorough theorization of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic under a federal perspective. Much has been written about the 'leader-laggard' dynamic, but the lack of clarity, concrete theorization and a lack of recent literature have been major limiting factors for a more in-depth analysis of the fluidity and volatility of actors and the actual environmental policy outcomes. Although the current literature is surrounded by a strong political nuance, it neglects the effects of the economy and its potential implications amid periods of instability and wider discontent. Focusing on

the blend of politics and the economy, a more clear-cut picture of the basic variables may emerge to better understand the current situation. In this vein, the theoretical impasse and the need for more consistent theorization and deeper explanation of the variations at domestic and EU level are more explicitly couched in the theory of federalism (see Chapter 3).

Therefore, objectives 3 and 4 of this thesis, namely the use of federal theory perspectives explore the influential factors shaping the 'leader-laggard' dynamic within a more contemporary context. This also enhances and enriches our approach to consolidate a profound and substantial basis for a detailed EU multi-level governance analysis. Federal theories are potentially a valuable tool to think in different political terms than in the past because they perceive multi-level governance as a two-way relationship between the federal and state level while being more capable of analyzing the 'downloading' of policies. Furthermore, federalism is more directly intertwined with the increased interest of task allocation and distribution of power at the EU level. The collaborative and competitive spirit in the relationship between the EU and member states regarding policy making and implementation discloses the different dynamics and trends in EU environmental policy.

Conclusion

From obscurity to full recognition, EU environmental policy was subject to many variations in the speed and content of its policies. Although the sluggish beginning of EU environmental policy did not foreshadow a rapid growth, the incremental way and expansionist ambitions very soon became the driving force for a total transformation backed by the momentum of European Integration. The detailed analysis of the evolutionary path provided aimed at defining the peculiarities, different dynamics, and objectives of each time period. Each phase is distinct and reflects clearly the main problems and factors for the adoption of policy measures, action plans, and strategies. Although today it can be argued that the legislative action was very successful, ineffective implementation is a constant threat not only to environmental policy but also to the project

of European integration, thus leading to significant differences in the implementation patterns and ultimately to the so-called 'implementation deficit' among member states. Hence, this problem has inevitably led to the distinction between 'leaders' and 'laggards' in environmental policy. The analytical context of the debate on the 'leader-laggard' dynamic attempted to investigate, identify and shed light on this under-researched issue, especially in recent years which appears to have particular importance in a period of strict austerity and recession. The emergence of various aspects, such as political, economic, cultural and institutional factors, along with the way of action, influence and position of 'leaders' and 'laggards', contributed to a thorough understanding and a clearer view of how EU environmental policy is shaped. Finally, having examined the literature on the 'leader-laggard' dynamic and highlighted the weak theorization, the next chapter goes on to explore the main theoretical approach taken in this thesis for the understanding of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic in terms of 'downloading'/ implementation from a federal perspective.

Chapter 3 - Theorizing the environmental 'leader-laggard' dynamic in the context of EU environmental policy.

Introduction

Although the traditional approaches of Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism set the guidelines and greatly influenced the academic debate on the evolution of the EU, they were unable to conceive and interpret the transition to a new model and policy implementation respectively, whereas the renewed interest in federalism has provided a more contemporary theorization of the EU. The aim of this chapter is to identify, illustrate and analyze the importance of federal theory in the study of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic and the implementation of EU environmental policy during the economic crisis. More specifically, I will start off by introducing how we conceive the EU nowadays. Then I will move on to explain the theories of Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism along with their main critiques and why they are not suitable for this research. Thereafter, I will give a detailed account of the definitions of federalism, federal systems, and European federalism by pointing out their utility in this thesis. Finally, I will provide an analytical overview of the types of federalism and develop how the 'leader-laggard' dynamic is positioned within it.

3.1. How can we understand the EU analytically?

The European Union (EU) is a group of countries that bear liberal-democratic values and operate jointly (Hix and Høyland, 2011; Blair, 2014). The member states participating in the EU share common values related to democracy, human rights, and social justice, and respect the legal and institutional context (Cini and Borragán, 2016). Within the institutional environment of the EU, the diversity and unity of all member states are secured. The establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957 (the predecessor to the EU) triggered a big debate about the nature and inherent features of

this political entity (Beetham and Lord, 2014). In a broader frame, the EU is often regarded as something novel and unique, encompassing all the basic features of a traditional international organization combined with some state-like characteristics (Smith, 2005; Howorth, 2005, 2010). Furthermore, the EU is based on an international treaty by which sovereign states ceded a number of their competencies to that supranational organization (Bache et al., 2014). Some argued (Wallace, H. 2001; Laffan, O'Donnell and Smith, 1999; Majone, 2005) that the EU resembles a state because it includes a wide range of state functions and institutions, such as the European Commission, Council of Ministers, the European Court of Justice and the European Parliament. On the other hand, an international organization is focused primarily on specific policies or issues. In this light, the bulk of its activities is depicted as closer to the state (Follesdal and Koslowski, 2013). Alongside, the EU faces some deficiencies that are considered as fundamental issues of state sovereignty, such as taxation, the army and the police, and the heavy dependence on its member states. Moreover, a lack of adequate representation, low voting participation, public accountability and authorization of the EU's institutions from the European citizens has been noticed (Eriksen and Fossum, 2002: 401). Laffan et al. (2000: 74-8) assert that a key component of the EU is the blend of domestic and European features into one body. Drawing on this perspective, a system of international governance has emerged in which both the EU as the main political arena and member states as actors represent domestic and supranational interests (Laffan et al., 2000: 84-7). Hix (2005: 4) infers that the EU is a political system but not a state, mainly due to the absence of exclusive implementation competence that characterizes a state. The EU has also acquired all the appropriate policy features of a modern state, such as influencing policy-making and generating a large number of legislative acts (Hix, 2005). Additionally, the precedence of EU law empowers the EU regarding the obligatory character of policy-making.

Traditional theorization of the EU originates from the field of international relations and elaborates on the issues of international collaboration and regional integration. Two different perspectives summarize the dominant perceptions. First, some scholars conceive the European Union as an international or interstate organization (Laffan, et al., 2000; Moravcsik, 1998; Scharpf, 1999; Wallace, 2001). Second, some analysts like Hix

employ a wider conceptualization of the European Union as a type of polity resembling a state. Hix asserted that the EU is not a Weberian state but lacks the right to the monopoly of legitimate force. Moreover, he stressed that the EU could be characterized as a political system by developing strong relations between the institutions and harnessing the binding character of its policies across the European framework (Hix, 1994, 1999, 2005). This trend was mainly expressed in federalism presenting the connection of the EU to the systems of Germany, Switzerland and the US (Hooghe and Marks, 2003; Hoornbeek, 2004). Also, Lindberg and Scheingold (1970) pointed out that the EU as a political system involves political requests, governmental action, and public policies. The outcome of this debate is that some scholars (Jachtenfuchs and Kohler-Koch, 2004; Schmidt, 2006) have argued that more attention should be paid to the issues of governance and less to a government. Based on this point, the EU has been characterized as a reformative exemplar of governance followed by a progress of institutional adjustments and procedures. It has also been observed that policy-making penetrates all the levels of governance involving various stakeholders, such as national governments, member states, supranational actors and interest groups (Laffan, 2000; Stone Sweet, 2004).

Some scholars such as Jupille et al., (2003) argued that the separation of international relations and comparative studies would provoke a significant rupture in the overall theorization of the EU but ultimately this did not occur. Globalization, international development, and domestic politics offered the possibility of considering the EU context from an integration perspective. While the EU has not since the very beginning been a federal union or a fully-fledged federation, nowadays it is regarded by some scholars (McKay, 2001; Weiler, 1999; Bache, 2007; Benson and Jordan, 2008; Panara, 2015) as a federation comparable to other federations but there are still doubts about its current form. The EU was originally planned as an international institution to facilitate and promote the trade of goods and services without constraints. Drawing on this point, a large number of studies based their analysis on the idea that the EU is not considered to be a system of governance by nature but a new political entity. Major exponents of this rationale as a unique entity were the rival perspectives of Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism. The effect of Neofunctionalist and Intergovernmentalist approaches on the current debate about the development of the EU integration has been

very significant, thus consisting of the first stepping stone of a coordinated effort towards a more comprehensive understanding of European integration and policy-making. In the context of the above analysis, what makes implementation a key component of EU policy is, first, the interplay between the supranational (EU) and national level (Member States) that affects and defines their relationship in terms of task allocation and distribution of powers through strong collaborative bonds. Second, the idea of integration is associated with high levels of performance, that is, good compliance and implementation records as policy outputs and effective delivery of policies as policy outcomes with regard to environmental quality.

3.2. Neofunctionalism

Neofunctionalism is considered as one of the first theories of European integration which seeks to explain the new regional cooperation resulting from the termination of the Second World War. This theory is concerned with issues of regional collaboration and the role of societal groups and political parties adopting an elite-driven approach towards the European integration process (Risse, 2005; Risse and Rosamond, 2005; Jensen, 2009; Börzel, 2013). The key characteristics of this theory are summarized in four points:

- a) additional weight is attributed to the state
- b) there is a wider area of activities associated with interest groups and actors compared to those domestically
- c) non-state actors obtain greater importance at international level
- d) the process of European integration is forwarded by spillovers (functional, political and institutional) (Haas, 1958, 1975, 1976)

Neofunctionalists contended that economic integration would be catalytic in the way states were engaged and this would thus advance political integration. Of great importance is the fact that international relations are not a zero-sum game but everyone can benefit when states are actively involved in the economic and political integration. Political integration constitutes the milestone of this theory despite an array of various perceptions enunciated (Haas, 1958; Lindberg, 1971). Lindberg (1971: 59) conceived it

as a supranational and collective decision-making procedure, while Haas (1958: 16) put it forward as a change in loyalty, anticipation and political activity.

Spillover is a condition in which a specific action is linked to a concrete objective and generates a state in which the initial aim can be determined by a set of further actions (Lindberg, 1963; Schmitter, 1969). There are three types of spillover: functional; political; and institutional or cultivated (Rosamond, 2005; Moravcsik, 2005; Niemann, 2006). Functional spillover unfolds the idea that modern economies are composed of various parts linking each other. As a result, it is difficult to seclude individual sectors from others. Based on that, Neofunctionalists believed that if state governments proceeded to integrate their financial sectors, the association of this sector with other sectors would create a spillover. An example of functional spillover would be the single market. The single market is associated with common rules that define the labour market. The corollary of setting up the single market and the removal of trade barriers was the adoption of common regulations in particular fields at the European level, although this had not been their initial goal or priority (Jensen, 2009).

Political spillover reflects the intentional political procedure in which political elites or interest groups consider supranational cooperation to be indispensable for problem-solving (Niemann, 2006). It also explains how the existence and concentration of political pressures push for integration within the context member states participate. The integration of one economy's sector prompts the interest groups to exercise pressure at the supranational level, especially to the body which is responsible for that particular sector. The shift of interest groups' operations at the European level can have a positive effect as regards the benefits they receive by better calculating the potential implications (Lindberg, 1963). Considering that the integration of sectors is a vital part of this process, potential inefficiencies would compel interest groups to demand further actions for integration by putting additional pressure on their governments (Jensen, 2009). An example of a political spillover would be the economic union, which is centrally controlled and deals with the common monetary policy over currency stability and macroeconomic policy for the single market (Bache et al., 2014). Similarly, another example would be the integration of environmental policy with other policies. Considering that environmental

issues such as cross-border pollution require transnational cooperation due to their nature, addressing these challenges at the EU level secures a common ground and approaches through increased cooperation (Lenschow, 2002; Jordan and Liefferink, 2004; Jordan, 2012).

Institutional or cultivated spillover occurs when supranational institutions such as the European Commission, the European Court of Justice and the European Parliament promote political integration by maintaining their mediating role between the member states (Tranholm-Mikkelsen, 1991; Niemann, 2006). Moreover, these institutions encourage the building up of transnational associations and assist national governments in collaborating effectively for the promotion of joint interests and agreements (Haas, 1961). Given that supranational actors have the benefit of good and comprehensive information, they want to expand and share it with state governments to achieve optimal results (Bache et al., 2014). Increased interest in a specific policy, such as agriculture or environmental policy, by more than one member states, requires hard bargaining. In this context, the European Commission undertakes the role of mediator to carry out the negotiations (Jensen, 2009).

There is also the view that the pluralistic way that states act which affects decision making mainly derives from the pressure of diverse interest groups and bureaucracy. Alongside, it could be argued that due to their pressure on governments, interest groups would facilitate the integration procedure (Risse, 2005). At its core, Neofunctionalism gives an explanation about the development of relations of domestic interest groups with their counterparts abroad (trans-nationalism) and those government sectors with the same sectors in other countries (trans-governmentalism). Moreover, this theoretical perspective highlights the actions of multinational corporations as non-state actors in the international political arena (Rosamond, 2005). Despite the existence of an explanatory context over spillovers, regional collaboration and the role of societal groups and political parties towards integration, a little or no connection to implementation is observed. This unavoidably shows a fundamental weakness to explain how the 'downloading' process operates.

3.3. Intergovernmentalism

The counterweight to Neofunctionalism was the theory of Intergovernmentalism expressed by Stanley Hoffmann (1964, 1966) and Andrew Moravcsik (1998). Its origin derives from the field of International Relations (IR), and particularly from the realist (Morgenthau, 1985) and neo-realist perspectives (Waltz, 1979). From an intergovernmental perspective, the criticisms of Neofunctionalism are focused on three points:

- a) European integration should be considered in an international framework. Territorial expansion was just one part of the emergence of the international system. Neofunctionalists anticipated an inexorable push for integration, which was based on domestic actions, given that international factors and dynamics were predetermined. This was reflected mainly with the change of the economic climate in the 1970s (Goldsmith and Page, 2010).
- b) The degree of European integration is constrained primarily by state preferences in autonomy, self-support of domestic bureaucracies, the diversity of state cultures, the prevalence of national identity and the influence of external factors (Fabbrini, 2013).
- c) The distinction of 'low (economic sphere) and high (national security and defense) politics' affects the prospect of European integration (Bulmer, 2015).

The theory of Intergovernmentalism sought to interpret the notion of the European integration process by adopting a state-centric approach and emphasizing the role of nation-states. Also, it perceived integration as a zero-sum game driven by states' interests and actions (Hix, 1999). More specifically, it introduced a context within which the process of decision-making through international organizations is explained. These organizations operate as agents for negotiating and sharing ideas among states. Hence, the legal footing rests on international treaties and membership is expressed on a voluntary basis. (McCormick, 2001, 2009). Intergovernmentalism contends that there is a cost-benefit analysis regarding the cooperation of member states in European integration (Bickerton et al., 2015). Under these terms, the concept of cooperation gains specific features. Notably, cooperation is not associated with ideological issues but rests on the

rational behavior of government. In this light, European integration is referred to as an institutionalized form of cooperation among states (O'Neil, 1996). The core of this theory lies in the principle of state sovereignty. This concept also obtains many understandings of the issues of independence and authority (Nugent, 2002; McCormick, 2009). Member states, in turn, exert control over the process of European integration without assigning their sovereignty. In practice, European cooperation is described as the concentration or distribution of sovereignty, rather than a transfer of sovereignty from the state to the supranational level (Keohane and Hoffmann, 1990: 277). The delegation of sovereignty to the supranational institutions is of critical importance. In essence, supranational actors are thought to serve the interests of the member states without having an autonomous or independent role. In this regard, the main emphasis of this theoretical perspective is put on the role of nation-states and decision-making whereas the implementation process is almost entirely ignored. By this account, a rather weak interpretative analysis of the application of policies is demonstrated.

3.4. The Neofunctional and Intergovernmental criticisms

The primary aim of Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism was to create a context within which they could explain the scope and dynamics of European integration and EU governance. Both theories originate from the field of International Relations (IR). In a broader frame, International Relations deal with two basic notions: war and peace, and the connections among states. Based on this assumption, international relations scholars expressed their interest in European integration because the main concept was the cessation or elimination of any event of war. Thus, through the lens of these theories, the EU is not only a theoretical phenomenon but is the starting point for interpreting a range of other phenomena (Jachtenfuchs, 2001). Also, the rupture of the traditional perception of the state changed the way of understanding the EU. The development of the EU indicates a particular figure of polity that is not attached to the fixed pattern of the state (Hix, 1994, 2005). In contrast, the EU as a novel system generates relevant and compulsory policy. In a sense, these theories are arguably 'trapped' in an old-fashioned

perception of the nature of the EU raising many doubts and prompting many critiques. Therefore, the development of the theoretical progress from other areas of social sciences paved the way for more modern theoretical interpretations of EU policy making and integration, as will be explained below in this chapter with the use of federalism (Haas, 2001, 2004; Rosamond, 2005).

More specifically, some of the main critiques of Neofunctionalism focus on the theoretical and empirical basis, as expressed by an array of scholars (Haas, 1975, 1976; Moravcsik, 1993, 1998, 2005; Taylor, 1990; Keohane and Nye, 1975; Keohane and Hoffman, 1991; and Schmitter, 2005). The first critique is that Neofunctionalism has shown a rather weak connection between theory and analysis of actual integration, thus failing to clearly diagnose the progress of the European Community. In a sense, neo-functionalism was seen as a 'grand theory' seeking to explain the scope of integration. This arguably resulted in the first major internal rupture. In response, 'middle-range theories' were created, which attempted to interpret certain aspects of an issue, rather than the entirety, by pointing out their outdated character, namely that these theories had become largely worn out (Haas, 2001, 2004; Ruggie et al, 2005). The second critique was the establishment of a supranational elite and its loyalty regarding the European institutions (Risse, 2005). The presence of member states' officials in the Commission allegedly serves and accounts for the interests of each member state. At the same time, it was observed that there is an inclination to their country of origin when crucial political issues emerge (Hooghe, 2002).

Third, Haas (1975, 1976) identified that there was a failure of regional integration and European cooperation through spillovers. He suggested that the development of the European Community could have been examined through the prism of international interdependence, stressing, however, that the theory of regional integration that describes this entity is surrounded by a supranational cloak. Fourth, this theory focused primarily on the increased significance attributed to the concept of the nation-state as the main actor and regional cooperation within the context of the EU where states have an influential role in negotiations (Moravcsik, 1993). Finally, the last criticism is centered on the strong elitist aspect (political and administrative elites), thus neglecting the engagement of

citizens in the integration process, which is largely characterized as non-democratic (Risse, 2005; Niemann, 2006).

Taking into account that Neofunctionalism develops an argumentation over spillovers and highlights the importance of the relationship and interaction between domestic and supranational functions, the analysis is restricted to a rather descriptive and incomplete account. To a certain extent, it gives the sense that some issues regarding the workings of both levels, national and supranational, and the focus on vested interests can be explained but this is not enough to deploy a deep and thorough analysis on policy implementation and the main drivers leading to implementation deficit. As a result, the consideration of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic in this context falls into an outdated and short interpretation, thus paving the way for a more contemporary theorization which is best expressed through federalism (see Chapter 1).

On the other hand, given that Intergovernmentalism perceives European integration under a state-centric approach, a lack of profound explanations on the aspects of policy implementation is noticed. Instead, this theory presents a monolithic account of European integration and governance by highlighting the issue of national preference formation. This issue is also linked to the international demand for cooperation deriving from the national level and inter-state bargaining, which is influenced by the governmental elites (Bache et al., 2014). At the core of this theory, the international dimension is overshadowed by the power of member states while cooperation is the fruit of hard interstate bargaining (Peterson, 2015). Therefore, this theory seems to be very rigid and lacks an analytical interpretative framework in terms of task allocation and how policies are implemented. In so doing, there is a significant weakness to explain the 'downloading' of policies, and subsequently the actions of implementers (see Chapter 1).

Against this backdrop, the 'leader-laggard' dynamic cannot be adequately addressed because Intergovernmentalism is focused on a rather sterile description of cooperation and sovereignty. Likewise, it provides incomplete answers on the increasing role and influence of supranational actors such as the European Commission in policy making and, finally, does not respond to who undertakes the task of policy implementation. The lack of in-depth analysis, unavoidably, leads to the search of other theories that examine

the distribution of power and, more specifically, the implementation of policies through the lens of multi-level governance such as federalism (see Chapter 1).

An alternative approach examining the environmental policy 'leader-laggard' dynamic in the EU is the theory of federalism, by setting out a comprehensive approach regarding EU integration, task allocation, distribution of power, and the relationship between the supranational and national level (Kelemen, 2000, 2003; Börzel and Hosli, 2003; Auer, 2005; Trechsel, 2005; Benson and Jordan, 2008, 2011). In addition, as will later be explained in this chapter, federalism has the potential to explore more in depth and analytically the influential factors shaping EU environmental policy (objective 3 of this thesis), and to deploy a comparative framework, which is essential to investigate the 'leader-laggard' dynamic at the domestic and supranational level. The distinction of competencies essentially reflects the extent of regional dynamics in terms of political and economic power between the member states and the EU. Moreover, this approach allows an analyst to focus on the 'downloading' policy process that is central to debates on 'leaders' and 'laggards' (see Chapter 1).

Despite the fact that federalism constituted one of the first theories of European integration, it has been overshadowed by the theories of Neofunctionalism (Haas, 1968) and Intergovernmentalism (Hoffmann, 1966; Moravcsik, 1998). Renewed interest in federalism (Nicolaidis and Howse, 2001; Kelemen, 2004; Majone, 2006) in the 2000s has shown a rebirth and a significant trend in analyzing more contemporary developments in the EU (Pollack, 2001, 2005; Majone, 2006; Menon and Schain, 2006; Benson and Jordan, 2008, 2011). In particular, federalism focuses on the operational and regional character of political power between the different levels of governance and aims to explicate European integration under a more regulative context. In addition to this, federalism conceives European integration as a multi-level state-shaping procedure with strong interaction between the domestic and supranational levels (Jordan, 2008).

Against this backdrop, the critiques on federalism express some broader concerns. The idea to a more powerful Europe and at the same time to weaker states reflects federalism as a negative element of centralism (Auer 2005). From a critical perspective, this view brings to the fore the questionable and multifaceted aspect of federalism regarding the

distribution of powers and task allocation in times of crisis. In the wake of the economic crisis, this concern is, plausibly, fueled by Euroscepticism and the lack of trust among the member states regarding the existing political and economic structure of the EU. Therefore, these concerns link mistakenly federalism to a further weakening of the nation-states by giving up their national sovereignty to a 'supranational economic union'. Acknowledging that for many the role of the nation-state is still strong; more efforts will be required to establish trust with regard to the role of the EU as a multi-governance system. Along these lines, the EU integration moves forward but at a slower pace. The role of 'leaders' and 'laggards' not only in EU environmental policy but also in other policy areas shows clearly the contrasting views of member states on EU integration. Despite the growing literature on federalism, a concrete analytical context and further lucidity are needed to estimate its long-range contribution to the understanding of the EU (Benson and Jordan, 2008, 2011) as well as more empirical testing (Trechsel, 2005). Beyond these critiques, the EU is regarded as quite federal in its structure including a high degree of autonomy of its member states, constitutional and institutional framework and constrained sovereignty (Auer, 2005).

In spite of the main concerns and critiques which focus on the utility and practicality of federalism, this theoretical approach has some very strong advantages that are analyzed in this thesis. First, according to Benson and Jordan (2008), federalism serves the need to clarify and interpret specific parts of the nature and current form of the EU. Second, it offers a comparative approach between the EU and other multi-level systems such as Germany and the USA, highlighting the various forms of federalism (Nicolaidis and Howse, 2001; Börzel and Hosli, 2003; Benson and Jordan, 2011). Third, it attempts to explain the course and the historical evolution of EU integration (Burgess, 2000). Fourth, it perceives differently the vertical distribution of tasks between the various tiers of EU governance (Weale et al., 2000; Weale, 2005; Börzel and Hosli, 2003; Benson and Jordan, 2011). Fifth, for the purpose of this thesis, federalism better captures the domestic trend-setting in policy implementation as it is, more accurately, centered on the driving forces affecting the performance and subsequently the 'leader-laggard' dynamic.

3.5. Federalism

3.5.1. Definition

Federalism has triggered many debates among scholars about its core meaning and its theoretical aspects. It refers to the issue of unions encompassing the accession of peoples, groups, and polities without conceding their identities (Elazar, 1994: xv). Daniel Elazar conceives federalism as *'the combination of self-rule and shared-rule through constitutionalized power sharing on a non-centralized basis'* (Elazar, 1993: 190). The main idea of federalism is that it institutionalizes specific relations of the constituent parts of the decision-making process. It also offers the opportunity to better organize political power and authority in a political system, arguing that these relations should be congruent with federal elements. Additionally, it interprets the constitutionalized division of powers among the equally respective participators at various sectors of governance (Elazar, 1987: 12). Similarly, King (1982) conceived federalism around a normative and philosophical mantle underpinned by federal principles. Burgess and Gagnon (1993) interpret federalism as a form of political organization that includes a wide range of federations, confederacies, associated statehoods, unions, leagues, condominiums, constitutional regionalization and constitutional 'home rule'.

Federalism comprises a broader idea, theoretical framework and a set of principles that applies to various political forms, such as federation and confederation (Karmis and Norman, 2005). Federalism, in simple words, is the coalescence of independent regional units into a central unit where the constituent parts keep a part of their autonomy and repudiate another part for joining the union. The constituent parts, namely regional units, ensure their existence within the federation, in which legal footing is based on treaties or a consensual constitution (Abromeit, 2002). Also, the principle of divided sovereignty is fundamental in distributing the tasks across the various levels of governance (Abromeit, 2002). Federalism is characterized as an institutional deal including three basic principles: autonomy, superposition, and participation along with the division of authorities and two different, independent levels of government (Koslowski, 1999; Auer, 2005).

More analytically, the notion of autonomy describes that the constituent parts enjoy a large degree of political and economic autonomy by keeping their own institutional and legal framework. This implies that the idea of sovereignty is inherent but restricted. Following this, the idea of superposition refers to the allocation and use of authority between the constituent parts, which are subject to an upper law unit. Finally, the concept of participation implies that the cooperation and association of the central government with the constituent parts (Auer, 2005). The role of the constituent units is to partake in setting, legislating and implementing the federal policies. This enables the constituent parts to undertake a number of actions, such as taking initiatives for legislation, deliberating on federal regulations, modifying international treaties, resorting to the federal court and applying federal laws. On the contrary, the federal unit is responsible for overseeing the constituent parts in the implementation process (Kelemen, 2003).

3.6. Federal systems

3.6.1. Federation – Confederation distinction

Federation was established by the founding fathers of the USA in the Constitution of 1787 expressing a new system of governance (Ostrom, 1986). They conceived that a new type of polity could balance the issues of financial claims for creating a union with political requests and retaining the sovereignty of states. Its scope was to set up a central government composed of a polity in which the constituent parts, namely the states, govern themselves and form a constitutional government followed by the division of powers across the levels and burden sharing (Auer, 2005). A federation is a union encompassing constituent parts and a central government, which are delegated with responsibilities and powers through a constitution elected by the citizens (Watts, 1998, 2008). Confederations are distinguished from federations as a form of federal system by emphasizing the fact that institutions of shared rule rely on constituent governments which, in turn, are composed of representatives and act indirectly to the electoral and fiscal footing (King, 1993).

In federations, there is a direct connection between the government and citizens, and unlike in confederations, the direct relation emerges between the shared institutions and the state governments (Elazar, 1993). Elazar (1987) and Osaghae (1990) refer to federations as non-centralized by explaining that decentralization presupposes hierarchy with power stemming from the upper levels. The term non-centralization implies a constitutionally structured distribution of power, which better fits in federations. Some of the suggested indices measuring aims and autonomy are the allocation of legislative and administrative jurisdictions, the distribution of funds, decentralization to non-governmental agencies, constitutional constraints and the involvement of constituent unit governments in the federal decision-making procedures (Abromeit, 2002).

Federal constitutions provide the context in which the allocation of powers, general operations and the role of participants are determined. It is perceived as a form of statehood in which the constitution operates as a foundation. Federal constitutions institutionally ensure the existence of constituent units (Auer, 2005). In addition to that, federal constitutions define and allocate authorities to the federal unit and its constituent parts (Abromeit, 2002). Such a constitutional setting presupposes an active participation of citizens through elections or referenda in the process of decision-making. Furthermore, economic autonomy can be matched with the sovereignty of constituent parts. The emergence of conflicts and frictions in the execution of tasks can have a significant impact on the lower and upper levels of government. Constitutional adjudication constitutes an umpire and is a useful tool for resolving disputes (Auer, 2005).

The distribution of funding in a federation is very significant because, first, financial resources tend to increase or reduce governments' capabilities for exerting their duties (McKay, 2001, 2005) and, second, taxing powers and outlays are very useful tools for influencing the economy (Donahue and Pollack, 2001). Watts (1998) proposed that shared institutions would cause a democratic deficit in confederations rather than in federations because of their direct election by the citizens. Another important element of setting up federal systems is the extent of elite accommodation and public engagement. The role of democratic procedures affects elite accommodation, particularly when emerging issues of legitimizing new political systems to the extent that they can facilitate

or impede the bargaining process (Watts, 2008). The notions of cooperation and competition among the institutions are inherent in federal systems, along with the appropriate balance needed for intergovernmental negotiations. Finally, an equally important issue for resolving internal disputes is the influence of political culture in terms of tolerance and admittance of specific territorial groups (Auer, 2005).

3.7. European Federalism

A European Federation was the clear aim of federal ambitions and plans laid down in the Treaty of Rome in 1957 (Koslowski, 1999). Given that multi-level systems define the allocation of powers between the levels, the EU exhibits an array of federal elements (Laursen, 2016). First, the EU constitutes a bicameral legislative body with a strong upper house (Council of Ministers) and a weaker lower house (European Parliament) that operate as a central government, with member states as the subunits. Both levels are permeated by formal rules on the basis of a mutual agreement that autonomy of each level is secured and is simultaneously confined by the central government (Trechsel, 2013). In doing so, the form of the existing structure cannot change unilaterally due to the formal agreement of both sides (Auer, 2005). Second, the process of federalization of the EU argues that the EU is grounded in a voluntary basis of those participating ('coming together') and not in a relationship of coercion ('holding together') (Benz, 2003; Swenden, 2004). Third, the bulk of authorities dealing with legislative action (policy and decision making) are delegated to the EU level where member states undertake an executive action (implementation). Despite the differences over implementation issues among member states, there is a high degree of collaboration and coordination, which is widely known as a 'top-down' or 'downloading' process (Mendez, 2005; Papadopoulos, 2005; Chrysoschoou, 2009), and these are both central aspects of the 'leader-laggard' debates (see Chapter 2). The distribution of tasks laid out by consecutive treaties determines the institutional footing of the EU and member states' functions (Börzel and Hosli, 2003). In addition to that, the principle of subsidiarity defines the role of EU policy making, develops political links and changes the dynamics of integration (Follesdal, 1998; Jordan, 2000).

Fourth, the principle of negotiation governs the EU legislative procedure (Stein and Turkewitsch, 2008). Hueglin and Fenna (2006) argued that national governments play a vital role in 'council governance', stressing the notion of cooperation between national governments and supranational actors. Fifth, the creation of the Monetary Union constituted a basic instrument for the single market and the first step towards fiscal federalism within the EU. The establishment of the European Central Bank (ECB) (1998) and the adoption of the Euro currency (1999) laid the foundations as one of the biggest achievements of the EU. The main principles of European macroeconomic policy include monetary and fiscal policy, exchange rates and market structures. The exercise of fiscal policy is followed by rules to avoid excessive fiscal deficits or debts and achieve a budgetary balance or surplus. These rules concern and apply to all levels under the basic idea of keeping sound finances (Alesina et al., 2005). The main objective of the monetary policy is to retain price stability and to assist, design and carry out the general economic policies of the Community (Begg et al., 2003; Lenza and Reichlin, 2010). All of these federal features described above are strongly echoed in the context of EU environmental policy, where the institutional setting provides solid foundations and ensures a multi-level approach and comparative evaluation. A closer study shows that the political and economic dimensions are the basic driving forces leading to a more realistic consideration by using comparable indices, such as policy adaptation and fiscal performance (Laursen, 2016). Simultaneously, this attributes more qualitative features to the 'leader-laggard' dynamic and 'top-down' approach.

On the other hand, many voices have expressed that Europe is confronted with some structural weaknesses in terms of being a federal polity. Schmitter (2000: 45) argued that the way to a fully-fledged federalist state is anticipated to be a difficult task due to the absence of statehood and nationhood. On the contrary, the diversity of national identities and political cultures gives a boost to the main idea of federalism, which seeks to unify rather than segregate (Lavdas and Chryssochoou, 2007). Tsebelis (2002) identified an increase in the number of veto players given the enlargement of the EU. Despite the fact that a number of powers have been conceded to the European Parliament under the co-decision rule, the 'council governance' that involves the Council of Ministers is a very powerful veto player. Member states are entitled to amend or change the treaties of the

EU based on the unanimity rule. Some argue that the unanimity rule is an impediment and causes a 'federal deficit' (De Witte et al., 2013). Based on the principle that every member state is considered equal irrespective of its size, this empowers the subunits to have an increasing role regarding the amendment of the treaties (Falkner, 2011). The allocation of disproportionate power to the subunits causes imbalances with a stronger role for the member states and a weaker role for the central government (Follesdal, 2005). Moreover, the lack of actual tax and spending capacity reflects the limited resources of the budget (Donahue and Pollack, 2001; Lindner, 2005), and the wider tax variations of member states (McKay, 2001, 2005).

3.8. Types of Federalism and the 'Leader-Laggard' Dynamic

Having illustrated the basic features of federalism, federal systems, and European federalism, in the following section a more detailed analysis of the three main versions of federalism is provided, namely cooperative, regulatory and fiscal federalism. Furthermore, an explanatory context about their basic functions and utility is given, with a view to better understanding of EU environmental policy and the 'leader-laggard' dynamic. The selection and use of the three different versions of federalism (cooperative, regulatory and fiscal) (Moravcsik, 2001; Oates, 2002; Church and Dardanelli, 2005; Fossati and Panella, 2005; Kelemen, 2007; Begg, 2009) has to do mostly with the current needs and federal vision of the EU. More specifically, after a long period of disputes and contestations on the nature and the form of the EU, these versions explain more clearly and eloquently the various dynamics and trends within the European area. Each version is underpinned by a strong theoretical background and a systematic approach thus allowing the researcher to focus on specific functions or parts of the EU. Finally, the normative context provided by the selected theoretical perspectives gives a detailed analysis of the allocation and organization of political power across the two levels of EU governance as well as the integration process.

3.9. An analytical framework

Following the brief outline presented in Chapter 1 with regard to the analysis of the different approaches of federalism used in this thesis, in this part, I shall show more analytically how cooperative, regulatory and fiscal federalism develop the issue of implementation of EU Environmental policy and the 'Leader-laggard' dynamic (see Chapter 2).

3.9.1. Cooperative Federalism

Cooperative federalism was the predominant notion of American federalism from 1954 until 1978, reflecting the key policy issues such as market failure, postwar affluence, racism, urban poverty, environmentalism and individual rights (Kincaid, 1990). It was characterized by the concepts of social equity and political change, along with the state and federal penetration into the jurisdictions of each level. According to Weiser (2003), some of the advantages of cooperative federalism as a normative approach are the following:

- i) it considers long-term state preferences and autonomy
- ii) it facilitates participation and strengthens accountability regarding public policies
- iii) it allows experimentation and competition among states
- iv) it relies on the economy of state governments

The ideological basis of cooperative federalism is grounded in law and economics (Inman and Rubinfeld, 1997). The main concept is that these arrangements are held in a legislative body (Wittman, 1989) or through subunits of local governments that are endorsed by the central government or other units such as courts (Ellickson, 1979). Elazar (1964, 1991) conceives cooperative federalism as a political procedure led by various actors at different levels who seek to adjust their actions given that cooperation due to competition may involve conflicts and common interests. Cooperative federalism perceives the main function of the central government as corrective to the inefficiencies of lower level agencies, that is, weakness to adequately address particular issues due to,

for example, lack of resources and capacity, and to provide better public services through inter-jurisdictional bargaining (Zimmerman, 2001).

This approach is centered on the comprehension of how competencies are distributed efficiently between the two tiers, the federal level, and the state level, within the context of political systems (Sarnoff, 1997; Burgess, 2006). The basic assumption is that cross-boundary problems demand difficult solutions and, as a result, collaboration becomes necessary. Therefore, beyond a rigorous distinction of competencies 'separation des pouvoirs', it is useful to understand the operating segregation of responsibilities within the various levels 'distribution des pouvoirs' (Börzel and Hosli, 2003: 183). This implies collaboration among the different levels, notably, on contentious issues such as the environment as a market failure (Fischman, 2005: 195). It is observed a concentration of legislative competences at the federal level that enables states to implement policies (Rodden, 2004). A possible loss of autonomy can be counterbalanced by strong democratic authorities in central decision-making.

O'Neill (1996) describes cooperative federalism as the combination of intergovernmental bargaining and the supranational character of policy making. However, there are various factors influencing that policy process. First, according to Hueglin and Fenna (2006: 63), the EU exhibits a council governance type of federalism where state governments have a prominent position. National governments are carriers of domestic interests and seek to negotiate them in intergovernmental meetings. Second, EU institutions would collaborate with state governments concerning the distribution of competences. Supranational and domestic actors would participate jointly in decision-making procedures. Particularly, member states have to cooperate with the European Parliament thus leading to a federal type of decision-making (Benson and Jordan, 2011). Third, the interaction of domestic and EU interest groups would induce a high degree of shared competences (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). Those interest groups can exert significant pressure on state governments and supranational institutions by promoting their issues to the EU level.

According to cooperative federalism, all actors should operate under the formal and informal rules of the institutions. Under the logic of cooperative perspective, the

distribution of competencies is based on the provisions of EU treaties (Börzel and Hosli, 2003). The principle of subsidiarity defines the limits of EU tasks and provides the lower levels with the opportunity to take action (Donahue and Pollack, 2001: 73; Fischman, 2005). Initially, task distribution is surrounded by political claims for collaboration which originate from cross-border issues (Kelemen, 2004). The outward nature of the problems increases political pressure, which would, in turn, suggest that domestic and EU actors collaborate more closely leading to 'a politics of competence' (Kelemen, 2004). As a result, the emergence of 'spillovers' in different areas would urge the deepening of cooperation.

Within the context of environmental policy, these spillovers would comprise a broader range of issues such as conservation, pollution and market competition (Stewart, 1992). State governments would gather their domestic claims and push for action at the EU level. On the other side, the EU has a mediating role seeking to balance the various requests and act based on the legal provisions. Cross-border issues would give EU actors the chance to widen the scope of environmental policy (Kelemen, 2004). Furthermore, distribution of competencies would be based on a legal or constitutional basis, namely treaties, which accommodate the claim for intercession. The lack of clear basis in the Treaty of Rome (1957) on environmental policy led to the adoption of Article 100 and Article 235, which deal with transboundary issues (McCormick, 2001). Finally, intergovernmental collaboration would stem from the necessity of distributing tasks with other actors either by coercion or by bargaining (Benson and Jordan, 2008).

In the frame of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic, 'leader' states in environmental policy would seem to converge with the requirements of the EU and push for the imposition of more stringent rules as it translates into fewer adaptation costs in 'downloading' policies. The collaboration of 'leader' states with the EU would provoke regulatory and economic benefits accompanied by policy innovations (Andersen and Liefnerink, 1997). A good example would be the export of technology and the strong competitive advantages for their industry derived from selling it to others (Bulmer and Radaelli, 2004; Börzel, 2001, 2007). On the other hand, 'laggards' would not be very willing to cooperate closely with the EU because stricter environmental standards entail additional economic costs in the

‘downloading’ of these policies (Börzel, 2003). Some of the main reasons are that the domestic change would, therefore, bumped into a loose regulatory framework and weak administrative structure (Bomberg and Peterson, 2000). Hence, this would trigger an implementation gap and exacerbate the institutional capacity of ‘laggards’, resulting in various tensions with the EU and other member states.

3.9.2. Regulatory federalism

Regulatory federalism draws its origin from the surge of governmental political action during the 1960s and 1970s. The alarming increase of social, financial and environmental repercussions has affected the shaping of regulatory policies until today (Oates, 2003). According to Kelemen (2000: 133), *‘the main institutional structures of federal-type systems formulate the deployment of regulatory policy’*. This is based on two findings. First, power sharing between the federal and state government levels causes a ‘politics of competence’ (Kelemen, 2004: 11). Throughout integration, the allocation of competences defines that the federal government takes up the main role in policy making and states are responsible for the implementation of policies. Second, the accumulation of power at the highest level affects the ‘politics of discretion’ (Kelemen, 2004: 12). The dispersion of power across the executive and legislative bodies enables the judiciary (e.g. the European Court of Justice) to mediate for the implementation of the various policies.

A basic feature of the distribution of competences is the alteration of actors’ preferences. Kelemen contends that federal and state levels strive to increase their political clout and authority. By doing so, the federal government attempts to materialize its choices by obtaining wide support, removing possible obstacles and expanding its jurisdictions: a so-called ‘three for one offer’ (2004: 13). Simultaneously, state governments aim to gain popular support and increase their hopes for re-election by strengthening the autonomy. According to this theoretical perspective, when power is concentrated, such as in the Westminster type of federal system, the limited participation of federal courts would be noticed in the regulatory procedure leading to the greater discretion of state governments in federal laws.

On the other hand, when power is allocated, any tensions related to the legislative and executive tiers would urge the involvement of the federal court. The active role of the court means that it may coerce and decrease any discretion of the states about the implementation of federal regulations taking into account the fragmentation of federal government (Kelemen, 2000). In this context, the scope of federal government has expanded and is concerned with areas that were under the exclusive authority of nation states. This also seems to be reflected by the capacity of delegating tasks in the form of financial projects and grant-in-aid programs (Bagnall, 1985). State governments based on subsidies may urge state and regional governments to carry out specific operations and provide particular public services (Rodden, 2002). These competencies may include economic incentives to the states abiding by Congressional or Treaty rules. First, the federal government would use grant programs to make state governments more actively involved. Second, the participation of state governments in these programs would lead to a monitoring of administrative procedures by the federal government (Bagnall, 1985).

It could be argued that federal regulation rests on homogeneous imposition and federal regulators that are subject to various interests with political and economic influence at all levels of governance. The essence of the federal regulation is the assignment of setting standards to the appropriate level of government (Hedge and Scicchitano, 1994). The economic aspect would propose that decentralization of responsibilities regarding public services can be ceded in state governments or local agencies including potential costs and gains linked to the service provided. That type of decentralization permits an adaptation of these services at each level. On the contrary, centralization presupposes homogeneity at all levels of services (Oates, 2003).

Based on this theoretical perspective, environmental issues and regulation are intertwined with the historical framework, the political environment and current trends (Buzbee, 2005). The regulation concerning environmental issues would stem from the interaction of industry, environmentalist movements, low-level governments and federal agencies. In Europe, this theory would imply that there is a high degree of interaction between the centre and the member states on environmental issues. Most of the problems have a regional background and demand broader solutions (Vogel et al., 2012).

In this light, environmental policies would first be tested and applied to the member states and then would be promoted to the federal level and from there to uniform application in all member states. In effect, the European Commission would harness its power to compel states to increment, rather than reducing the environmental standards.

Given the key role of the Single Market, the legislative bodies of the EU, the European Commission, and the European Parliament would be very sensitive for its smooth operation by increasing environmental standards (Vogel et al., 2012). Based on this assumption, the formulation of environmental policy would take into account the economic differentiation among the member states (Börzel, 2000; Liefferink et al., 2009). This process would be primarily aimed at rich regions that are economically affluent and prosperous, and then at those facing economic problems (Holman, 2004). These differences among states reflect a set of weaknesses and strengths which would fuel the 'leader-laggard' dynamic. By harnessing their advanced domestic regulatory framework, 'leader' countries in environmental policy would use different strategies to exercise pressure at the EU level in order to achieve better political and economic outcomes (Liefferink and Andersen, 1998). The incentive is, therefore, very strong because, on the one hand, they have advanced technology, knowledge, and expertise to deal with these issues in the frame of the single market, and on the other hand, they seek to impose their model and standards in order to avoid additional adaptation costs.

On the contrary, 'laggards' devoid of a relatively steady regulatory framework would adopt these costly policies and in return, they would request financial support in the form of side payments in order to keep up with the regulatory trends. In many cases, this would have knock-on effects within the member states. For example, this would cause policy 'misfit' and hamper the implementation process by shifting the blame to others (Börzel, 2001; Heritier et al., 2001). The involvement of the European Court of Justice would at this point be very important due to its critical intervention and rulings that largely define the actions of member states in cases of non-application of EU law and distortions of the single market, such as the case of the Danish bottle system (Panke, 2007). In harnessing the pressure of 'leader' states, the EU would adopt stricter regulations and impose harmonization of standards in all of its territory, despite the strong opposition from some

'laggards' in order to accelerate the pace of the adoption of a common and integrated approach.

3.9.3. Fiscal Federalism

The theory of fiscal federalism originates from the sector of public finance which was dominant during the 1950s and 1960s and dealt with the vertical structure and functions of the public sector (Musgrave, 1959). It anticipates that when the market system fails because of different problems facing the provision of public goods, the government, in turn, has to implement remedies in order to rectify these failures of which the environment is one. As a result of this market failure, state intervention is imperative. More specifically, such a failure can be largely seen in the sector of the environment due to environmental degradation such as pollution and climate change. These environmental challenges would pose significant risks in the operation of the single market making the intervention of the European Commission deem necessary. The aim of this theory is to examine the interaction and operation of various levels of government with the use of fiscal instruments such as intergovernmental grants (Oates, 1999).

The approach of fiscal federalism puts forward a normative context about the concession of competencies to different levels of government associated with the right to implement a policy through fiscal instruments, such as the transfer of funding from the central authority to the constituent parts (Musgrave, 1959). At the core of this theory, it is argued that the central government is liable for macroeconomic consolidation and income redistribution to address the needs of the poor (Oates, 1999, 2008). One of the primary objectives of the devolved levels of government is the provision of goods and services consumed in their constituencies. Adjusting the type of goods and services to the specific preferences and local conditions of the constituencies would result in increasing economic prosperity. In order to optimize social well-being, fiscal federalism adopts the premise that local standards diversify proportionally (Ahmad and Brosio, 2006).

The 'decentralization theorem' considers the response to the local provision of public services to be equable to the level of public expenditure (Majocchi, 2008). Fiscal

decentralization takes place under a specific context of legal provisions where lower levels of government take over competencies deriving from the Constitution or statutes in order to proceed with the increase of taxes and expenditure operations (Oates, 2005, 2008). Some indicative examples of fiscal decentralization are Germany, Argentina, Brazil, India, Canada, the USA, and Switzerland. Administrative decentralization occurs when a large portion of taxes increase at the central level. However, various funding programs are allocated to decentralized bodies, which are responsible for the implementation of expenditure functions, while adopting the rules of the central government and acting as its representative (Obinger and Castles, 2005; Obinger et al., 2005; Sellers and Lindstrom, 2007).

There are two different versions of fiscal federalism. The first generation of fiscal federalism (FGFF) is deemed, to a large extent, as regulative considering that public decision-makers are seeking to augment social well-being (Musgrave, 1959; Rubinfeld, 1987). The second generation of fiscal federalism (SGFF) builds upon the first generation and contends that sub-national officials act on the basis of the objectives (fiscal and political incentives) of institutions which frequently deviate from optimizing social prosperity (Brennan and Buchanan, 1980; Salmon, 1986; Qian and Weingast, 1997; Garzarelli, 2004; Oates, 2005). According to Wildasin (2008), fiscal federalism has the characteristics of tax and spending adjustments and deals with the segregation of policy and fiscal interaction of different levels of government. Musgrave (1971) and Begg (2009) interpret fiscal federalism from a different angle. The main notions of stabilization, distribution, and allocation seem to be providing a broader context of the EU budget. More specifically, stabilization would respond to the higher levels of government and multi-level systems. Correspondingly, the distribution would be linked to the central government or in the case of the EU, the European Commission, would be responsible for eliminating tax competition among jurisdictions.

Finally, allocation of funding is related to public finance with a clear hierarchy from the federal government to the federal units. The main scope is to increase domestic standards and provide equal provision of services through governmental transfers or subsidies (e.g. Structural Funds Program by the EU) by taking into account local

preferences. Fiscal federalism also investigates the functions of various political and fiscal bodies to be fueled by incomplete information and control due to lack of proximity and knowledge about the local needs and their engagement (Boadway et al., 1994; Weingast, 2006). Particular knowledge of the constituencies' and residents' needs makes local governments respond better than the central government.

There are two types of grants that are central to the fiscal federalist perspective: conditional and unconditional. The transfer of this funding can be vertical (from the centre to the lower levels), horizontal (from the rich regions to the poor), or a blend of both (Begg, 2004; Enderlein, 2010). Hence there are some possible ways of using grants through the internalization of spillovers, fiscal consolidation and a better tax system (Rodden, 2002). Conditional grants stress the benefits that originate from local services for people dwelling in different areas. Contrary to this, unconditional grants are particularly used for fiscal consolidation. These transfers take into consideration the fiscal needs and efficiency of the lower levels of government, such as states, regions, and municipalities (Oates, 1999). The aim of fiscal consolidation is to establish fairness and eliminate those externalities that can forestall the distribution of resources and to offer stability as a counterweight to potential imbalances. Finally, it can produce a fair, advanced and productive tax system based on the economic output of each constituency (Weingast, 2009).

With regard to environmental policy, if the theory presented above holds true, it is expected that the internalization of inter-jurisdictional externalities and harmonization of environmental standards would demand central intervention in the EU for the protection of the single market (Jordan, 2005). The reasoning of harmonization is directly connected to product standards and free trade without barriers between the member states. Acknowledging that most of the environmental problems (environmental pollution) in the EU have a regional or local origin with a high-risk of 'spillovers' and cross-border impacts, the intervention of the EU would be unavoidable (Hildebrand, 1992). In this regard, the EU would intervene to help the member states to internalize the externalities, namely the cost of adopting environmental measures to prevent distortions in the single market. This would take the form of financial assistance such as grants and subsidies.

Furthermore, the transfer of funding and subsidies to less developed and new member states would rest on the logic of convergence, that is, the bridging of the financial gap with a view to raising environmental standards and optimizing the level of wellbeing and environmental quality. One of the main objectives of environmental subsidies would be the improvement of the provision of environmental services, such as those provided in more advanced member states. This, in practice, implies more competition and economic growth. From the 'leader-laggard' dynamic, 'laggards' would benefit because the transfer of funding would solve many of their internal problems as they lack the capacity and the financial resources to afford the costs. 'Leader' states would provide this financial assistance to poorer states but this may put their economies at a competitive disadvantage due to the lack of those funds that could otherwise be invested domestically.

On the other hand, the economic discrepancies within the EU, which have seemingly widened with the advent of the economic crisis (2007), would be expected to lead to fierce economic competition among member states and an increased flow of capital and people from the South to richer and more developed North (Hallerberg, 2011). At the same time, this would create detrimental effects not only to the economy of the poorer southern states suffering from recession and austerity but also to the more affluent states of the North with the capital flight, as they would contribute through intergovernmental transfers (funding) to poorer states to support their economy (Börzel, 2000, 2002; La Spina and Sciortino, 1993; Pridham, 1996).

Taking into consideration that the financial gap between 'leaders' and 'laggards' tends to grow, according to the fiscal federalist perspective, the EU would seek to achieve fiscal consolidation and allocation of funds, especially to Southern States, as can currently be seen with the Cohesion Funds²⁶. Their basic objective is to decrease regional inequalities

²⁶ The aim of coordinated funds (European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), Cohesion Fund (CF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF)) is to establish a clear link with the Europe 2020 strategy for generating smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU, improve coordination, ensure consistent implementation and make access to the ESI Funds as straightforward as possible for those who may benefit from them. Structural funds have also some environmental goals linked to environmental protection and resource efficiency, sustainable management of natural resources, climate adaptation, risk prevention and management, and transport, (developing rail transport, supporting inter-modality and strengthening public

in terms of income, wealth, and opportunities between the richer and poorer regions of Europe. Under this theory, the allocation of funds would support the poorer member states to better implement policies and tackle environmental issues. Given that 'leaders' wish to harness their competitive economic advantages to promote stricter environmental standards to the EU, 'laggards' due to their structural and administrative inefficiencies may misallocate these resources. In this light, they may prioritize economic policies and use these funds to correct budget deficits and achieve fiscal consolidation at the expense of the implementation of EU environmental policy.

Table 3.10.: A summary of the dominant federalist theory perspectives of this thesis

The table below summarizes and exhibits a brief outline with the basic ideas and notions explaining the main functions of the three different perspectives of the theory of federalism.

	Cooperative	Regulatory	Fiscal
Main Argument	Spillovers	Social, financial and environmental implications	State intervention to rectify market failures
Driver	Differences in regulatory standards in constitute units	Harmonization	Fiscal equalization between states

transport (European Commission, 2015). Date of access: 23/08/2016, For more information, please see the report of the European Commission "European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: official texts and commentaries, November 2015. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/guides/blue_book/blueguide_en.pdf

Relationship between the tiers	Two-way interaction	Competitive with the European Court of Justice as mediator	Decentralization
Competencies	Distribution of tasks (Subsidiarity)	'Politics of competence' 'Politics of discretion'	Macroeconomic consolidation, revenue allocation
Leader/Laggard Relationship	Inter-jurisdictional competition	Divergence of domestic standards (Implementation deficit)	Regional imbalances (rich and poor) impacting implementation capacity
Environmental Politics	Stricter environmental standards	Regulatory expansion	Minimizing costs of environmental measures

The use of the three different versions of federalism aims to provide an in-depth analysis and understanding of the ongoing EU federalization process. Each category describes a series of basic features which contribute to a better understanding of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic. Finally, Table 3.10. illustrates and de-codifies the key points of the three federal approaches taken in this thesis.

To begin with, cooperative federalism creates expectations that the occurrence of trans-boundary environmental issue "spillovers" in a wider area make the notion of cooperation indispensable. The inter-jurisdictional character of environmental issues generates increased pressure for political action between the national and supranational level and the domestic actors. This, therefore, leads to the issue of how and in which way task allocation is carried out. The imperative of sharing tasks is essentially the principle of

subsidiarity, which, under the founding treaties, defines the level of government undertaking responsibilities with regard to the efficient implementation of specific actions and policies. More explicitly, the EU level takes on the role of coordination by internalizing the externalities that might cause disputes among member states and assign the task of implementation to the lower level, that of member states. The allocation of competences aims to better address environmental issues in terms of efficiency and functionality. The two-way interaction between the EU and member states has a significant impact on their approach and the quality of policies adopted. At the level of member states, the existence of differences in environmental standards may give rise to conformity issues which, in turn, may result in the adoption of a stricter regulatory framework. This is more evident when the focus is on competition among the various jurisdictions and the implications that this may have on the single market. Due to the existence of diverse standards, states with lower standards may gain a competitive advantage at the expense of those with higher thus threatening the smooth functioning of the single market.

According to the logic of cooperative federalism, 'leader' states would not be very willing to lower their standards due to their strong domestic economic pressures, advanced regulatory framework, industrial and technological benefits and production of novelties. However, they would be seeking to establish a level the playing field by promoting their standards to the EU level which means fewer adaptation costs in the 'downloading' of these policies as they actually implement their own standards. By doing this, it is created an increased demand for better collaboration and coordination with the supranational bodies such as the European Commission. At the EU level, the European Commission may respond to pressure from member states but does not set the agenda. Accordingly, the EU is more oriented to correcting the inefficiencies of the national governments by imposing stricter EU environmental policies for the sake of the common market. On the other hand, 'laggards', despite their opposition, ultimately retreat and accept the new regulatory framework and stricter environmental standards. However, this is not to say that they would comply with it but they may see it as a way of imposing power by the most powerful members. Consequently, the rather weak political interest and willingness coupled with structural and administrative problems may weaken the policy implementation and result inevitably into an implementation deficit.

Subsequently, regulatory federalism is concerned mainly with the 'top-down' model explaining how the EU strives to achieve uniformity of standards and therefore harmonization of environmental policy. Drawing on that, the main rationale lies in the reduction of social, economic and environmental repercussions that originate from the diversity of regulatory standards of the member states. The divergence of standards essentially necessitates the 'politics of competence' and 'politics of discretion', that is task allocation, with specific actions taken by the EU and the member states under the principle of subsidiarity. In this light, the Commission or member states initiate the discussion on higher standards. The expectation would, therefore, be that the EU, as a regulatory state, will take on the responsibility for setting standards and favoring regulatory expansion. Such regulatory expansion amplifies the environmental policies and enriches their quality. The legal enforcement is expressed through the European Court of Justice which operates as an umpire for the resolution of any disputes. That being said, member states agree to preserve the integrity of the single market by accepting the cost of implementation. Therefore, the adoption of new policies and their implementation would mean additional adaptation costs. Consequently, the logic of regulatory federalism from a 'leader-laggard' perspective would suggest that because of their higher economic, political and technological capacity, 'leaders' are more likely to comply with the new policies. In contrast, 'laggards' would be expected to oppose the adoption of new measures due to high domestic pressures from vested interests, weak policy structures and higher adaptation costs.

Through the lens of fiscal federalism, taking into account that inequalities between the member states constitute a major obstacle and a constant threat to the functioning of the single market, the EU steps in by internalizing the externalities and pushing for harmonization of standards. For the sake of the protection of the single market, it is imposed EU central control, of which the primary aim is to detect the inefficiencies and provide remedies in case of distortion of competition and protectionism by member states. The decentralized system between the two levels enables the EU, through the European Central Bank, to undertake macroeconomic consolidation and, for the member states the revenue allocation. In so doing, the distinction of competencies serves mostly to facilitate the more efficient supervision and to better address the economic specificities of each

member state. However, the existence of inter-jurisdictional competition would create regional imbalances between the rich and poor states, resulting in significant economic discrepancies and implementation failures. As a corollary, this would lead to the transfer of financial resources in the form of subsidies or side-payments from either the EU or the richer states to the poorer ones as counterweight towards fiscal equalization.

In this vein, the theory would suggest that the means of achieving fiscal equalization are dependent on the degree of economic development, where 'leaders' having the financial capacity are able to more efficiently address environmental problems, unlike 'laggards' facing economic hardship are therefore unable to keep up with the 'leaders' because of lack of economic resources. Hence, priority is given to economic growth by putting the environment on the back burner. In terms of implementing the environmental policy, this translates into minimizing costs of environmental measures because their adoption is accompanied by a significant economic burden. In view of these, the goal is to provide funding to member states in order to more effectively respond to environmental problems and rectify their chronic problems and inefficiencies. However, further complexities may arise, such as inaction or deliberate avoidance for the implementation of environmental policies linked to funding allocation. This would mean that laggards in the vortex of large economic issues such as high public debt or budget deficits may misallocate these funds to redress potential losses in other sectors. As a consequence, this would create further gaps in the effective implementation of environmental policy with such a misallocation of funding beyond the initially set objectives.

Conclusion

Since the establishment of the EU, several theories sought to explain the complex and multifaceted picture of the EU. In an effort to better understand the nature of the EU, traditional theorization through Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism laid the foundations for a thorough discussion. However, these theories failed to respond to the changing dynamics of the European integration and give strong interpretations of the implementation of EU environmental policy. While these theories have long been argued

by some scholars to be outdated, they still influence academic debate on the EU. Some scholars, have suggested that the development of more contemporary theorizations to provide a better understanding of the multi-level governance system are needed, such as federalism. Although federalism as a theoretical approach is not new, its employment in this chapter and thesis as the main theoretical framework helps examine in-depth the implementation of EU environmental policy and the 'leader-laggard' dynamic during the economic crisis. Taking into account that the process of federalization permeates various parts of the EU, a stronger vision is sufficiently strengthened through the lens of cooperative, regulatory and fiscal federalism. The normative approach and theoretical explanations of these three strands of federal theory illuminate the factors shaping EU environmental policy implementation. Furthermore, the contemporary vision of EU politics adds value to the theory of federalism for two reasons. First, it captures European integration through the current trends and dynamics at the national and supranational level, and, second, it perceives and interprets more the variations and pressures amongst actors in the implementation process. Indisputably, within federalism, the 'leader-laggard' dynamic obtains a solid background and a more interpretative context upon which a systematic and methodical analysis is deployed. Finally, having set out the theoretical framework here, in the next chapter, I will analyze the methodological steps followed for the data collection of this study.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

Introduction

Having developed the theoretical background of this thesis in the previous two chapters, this chapter will operate as the intermediate link between the theory and empirical research. More specifically, I shall present in detail all the methodological approaches employed for this research. Initially, the chapter begins with the provision of the general methodological and philosophical framework (epistemology) as the basis for this study. Then it proceeds with the analysis of interviews in general, the definition of the elite and then elite interviewing as a primary data source followed by the use of a semi-structured questionnaire and open-ended discussion. Thereafter, the importance and value of the documentary analysis as a secondary data source is analyzed. Subsequently, the role of descriptive statistics (in the form of environmental infringements) as complementary to elite interviewing is also developed. With the completion of the analysis of the primary and secondary data sources, the issue of data validity is discussed in relation to the reliability and accuracy of the findings, focusing on the method of triangulation and other peer approaches. Finally, ethical considerations address the issues of anonymity, data protection and the purposes of this research.

4.1. General Methodological Framework

To begin with, research is a stepwise procedure focused on the collection and analysis of information from multiple sources aiming to increase knowledge and understanding of a particular topic or contribute significantly to existing knowledge. (Newman and Benz, 1998; Kumar and Phrommathed, 2005; Taylor et al., 2015; Weber, 2015). According to John Creswell (2013: 16), *“research is a process in which you engage in a small set of logical steps”*. Alternatively, it may be argued that research fills the void in existing knowledge; approves, disapproves and evaluates the results of prior studies; suggests

improvements; generates new ideas and ways of practice; and informs policy debates (Patton, 1990; Creswell, 2013). In doing so, research offers the opportunity to the researcher to constantly build the wall of knowledge brick by brick and present strong and credible results (Bickman and Rog, 2008; Seidman, 2013). This research is concerned with the 'leader-laggard dynamic' and the implementation of EU environmental policy during the economic crisis in the member states. Therefore, one of the most critical steps in the run-up to conducting research is data collection. However, before analyzing the distinction between primary and secondary data, it would be useful to unfold the main philosophical assumptions of this research.

4.1.1. The Philosophical Framework of the Research

To better understand, the overarching objective of this section is to introduce to the reader the philosophical underpinnings surrounding this study on how knowledge is obtained and interpreted. For some scholars, such as Mark Avis, for qualitative researchers the use of specific methods or traditions in research is customary (2003: 995). On the whole, the subjects studied by the social and political scientists are principally formed by the ontological and epistemological assumptions. However, it is crucial to consider whether these approaches are essential to do qualitative/quantitative research or are useful in adopting and explaining research methods. To a large extent, these assumptions give an expressive tone irrespective of whether they are recognized. In doing so, additional considerations must be considered in relation to the stance and approach taken regarding the theory and the processes followed. Burnham et al. (2004) contend that the assumptions linked to the type of knowledge (epistemology) and social reality (ontology) may be disconnected from the discourse of research methodology. Therefore, the analysis of the society needs to expand into more complicated issues such as the interpretation and not only the nature of social reality prior to tackling a problem. Before I proceed to the studied topic and choose the appropriate methodology is significant to understand the argumentation and background of social sciences' philosophical framework in order to provide strong links with the ontological/epistemological considerations to the research methodology. Although at first glance, ontology and epistemology demonstrate a high degree of difficulty, they cannot be excluded since they

set the foundations for this research (Grix, 2002). As David Marsh and Paul Furlong clearly state *“they cannot be put on and taken off whenever the researcher sees fit”* (2002:17). According to this view, for a researcher is reasonable to consider the ontological and epistemological assumptions when it comes to deploying and defending his piece of work. Moreover, this would imply that the acceptance of different or alternative positions may lead to better understanding and reflection on the scope of these theories.

In a more detailed analysis, a first step is a distinction between ontological and epistemological perspectives and the questions derived from them (Grayling, 2003; Yilmaz, 2013). Initially, ontology places itself in the realm of existence. In other words, it is a theory of ‘being’. In this sense, ontological questions are concerned with the very nature of being (Bateson, 1972). While this approach may generate some intellectual confusion over existential issues, one of the most crucial questions is whether or not the real world exists and operates irrespectively of our knowledge of it. Considering that the ontological context has at its core the view on how a researcher perceives the nature of the world, the epistemological framework put emphasis on the idea of knowledge (Krippendorf 1984:23; McNamee 1988; Greene 1994). In particular, the main epistemological questions focus on how and what we can know about the world. Arguably, the researcher has a keen interest to explore, identify and make links of real or objective relations between social phenomena and to study how these can be accomplished. From a critical perspective, this approach essentially drives us back to the ontological context where if one questions that there is no real world, it means that the observer cannot be objective due to the fact that s/he is part of the social world influenced by the social constructions of reality (Marsh and Furlong, 2002:19). Undoubtedly, this position reveals two interesting points, how actors interpret the world and how their explanation is construed by an observer. Therefore, the formation of real relationships between social phenomena obtains particular weight because it elucidates whether the direct observation is needed or the existence of some relationships is not directly noticeable. Although there is apparently a distinct relationship between one’s epistemological and ontological views, one’s epistemological stance may be affected by one’s ontological position. Following this explanatory context some answers are due on the importance to address these questions. Research is directly linked to philosophical

explanations, as seen above, due to the fact that they affect and refine the formulation of the research questions, the organizing plan of the study and the conclusions (Avis, 2003). Interestingly, the interpretations and explanations given on the issue of knowledge of the world are associated with the techniques and approaches employed by the researcher. Consequently, from a philosophical point of view, the value and success of each research method and theory are tied with the epistemological approaches denoting a lack of self-validation. However, this is better understood by the analysis and utility of the paradigms of social research which provide the context within which the ontological and epistemological foundations take shape.

4.1.2. Paradigms of Social Research

According to Guba and Lincoln (1988), a paradigm can be displayed as a collection of primary beliefs (or metaphysics) which is concerned with fundamental facts or principles. It reflects a particular conception of the world that determines, for the occupant, the inherent and essential features of the world, the position of the individual within it and the kind of relations to that world with its components. The beliefs are considered essential as they have to be merely taken on the basis of faith. Instead, it is a duty to establish the ultimate truth. Three key epistemologies are classified, such as positivism, realism, and interpretivism. Based on this categorization two basic camps are very distinct and contrasting, that is, positivism and realism. A more descriptive account follows below on the epistemological and ontological positions.

To begin with, positivism draws its origins from the field of natural sciences (Bryant, 1985; Ambert et al., 1995; Burnham et al., 2004). For its advocates, natural and social sciences are generally related. It could be said that positivism has affected social sciences but its influence is declining. There is also the belief that tactical relationships can be formed between social phenomena. This may occur while examining the theory and creating hypotheses that can be tested through observation (Marsh and Furlong, 2002:22). The long-established tradition of positivism asserts that the world is real and not socially constructed. In this regard, a reliable way to test the validity of the theory is by direct

observation. Furthermore, positivism rests on a foundational ontology which means that the social world exists irrespective of our knowledge of it (Burnham et al., 2004). In such a view, the main scope is to compose causal statements between social phenomena in an objective and value-free way by using interpretative models (Marsh and Smith, 2001: 529; Marsh and Furlong, 2002: 20). Additionally, it is believed that the knowledge of the world can be borne out by the senses. In simple words, this means that knowledge is built by an inductive process of gathering facts in order to set the basis for general laws. In a similar way, positivists contend that it is epistemologically feasible to distinguish empirical from normative questions in relation to what is and what should be (Marsh and Furlong 2002:23). The basic reasoning behind this is that the principal aim of the social sciences was to continue empirical questions in contrast to philosophy, metaphysics, and religion whose aim was the formulation of normative questions. As a result, this differentiation leads to a deductive procedure where the interpretation and evaluation of laws are allowed.

On the other hand, interpretivism disagrees with the core idea of positivism and contends that the intricate nature of social interactions cannot be sufficiently explored through the lens of natural science and positivism. The advocates of interpretivism argue that the world is surrounded by social constructions. A firm belief is that social systems can be interpreted in a way that captures this discreteness (Burnham et al., 2004). Against this backdrop, it is eloquently expressed that interpretivism constitutes the counterweight of positivism which presents an anti-foundationalism ontological position. In essence, the main challenge arising through interpretivism is that social phenomena and categories are not prefixed. In contrast, social interaction is the key point for their generation which makes them be in a condition of a lasting review. Hence, based on the ontological perspective, the world cannot exist irrespective of our knowledge of it. More explicitly, this means that the importance of interpretation, explanation and understanding of social phenomena is very high while influencing the outcomes. Accordingly, the meanings and interpretations can be fleshed out and understood by the use of discourse and tradition (Marsh and Furlong 2002:26). In this sense, the center of attention is placed on detecting and finding these discourses and traditions to set up the context and extract those interpretations given to social phenomena. Simultaneously, for the interpretive approach,

there is no objective truth or analysis due to the fact that social scientists and researchers operate within the framework of discourses and traditions. In doing so, there is the sense that knowledge is laden with a theoretical and discursive mantle and paves the way for the double hermeneutics; the condition by which the interpretations of people find expression in the social world; and the constructed interpretations provided in the research by social scientists (Stoker and Marsh, 2002).

Analyzing the above positions, I believe that social world can exist irrespective of our knowledge of it (Burnham et al., 2004). There is also the opportunity to observe causal relationships. Nevertheless, I think that social phenomena and causal relations cannot be subjected to direct observation. I do not espouse the view of positivists that social science can be value-free. Instead, I believe that the normative and empirical type of questions posed is crucial in social research. Thus, I am inclined towards the epistemological approach of critical realism where there is a combination of an interpretive context on social phenomena and outcomes as well as a good basis derived by positivism on social structure and action under causal explanations (Hay, 2002). Through the lens of critical realism, I assume that there are profound structural relationships between social phenomena as those described in the context of institutions and organizations which are crucial for the interpretation of behavioral stance but cannot be directly observed. More critically, I consider that these structures cannot fully define the agents and outcomes. However, they are depicted as a factor of restriction and facilitation on the position and behavior of individuals. Moreover, the perception and knowledge of the world we have may be theory-laden, which implies that an erroneous or inaccurate image may be drawn of social phenomena (Burnham et al., 2004). Significantly, I am not fully receptive of how the facts and actors are presented but I recognize that social phenomena occur irrespective of our explanation of them (Benton and Craib, 2010: 120). Consequently, the consideration of the external reality and the illustration of the current reality are necessary for the explanation of these relationships within social interactions.

4.1.3. Methodological and Theoretical Implications of my Research

4.1.3.1. Critical Realism and the Use of Theory

In accordance with the above-mentioned, the third and fourth objective of this research deal with the use of federal theory perspectives to explore the influential factors shaping the 'Leader-Laggard' dynamic in EU Environmental policy and to provide a more contemporary theorization of the EU (see Chapter 1 and 3). With the analysis of critical realism, a need to address the epistemological issue of investigating invisible or hidden key factors and relationships emerges. Adopting the critical realist perspective, I am of the opinion that the theoretical framework operates as a means to single out those situations and phenomena that can be directly observed or not. Additionally, the effect of critical realism in my research is grounded in the idea that researchers cannot be excluded or be independent of the social world as they are constituent parts and various social constructions with regard to their surroundings are developed (Burnham et al., 2004). Based on the above-mentioned, I used a diverse theoretical context applied to the empirical section of this thesis. With the deployment of the three variants of federalism (cooperative, regulatory and fiscal) I sought to explore, analyze, and interpret the task allocation, distribution of power, the relationship of the EU with the member states as well as the endogenous and exogenous factors affecting the implementation of EU Environmental policy in the member states during the economic crisis. By this token, a more inclusive and deep understanding of the current status of the EU and the 'leader-laggard' dynamic is provided by federalism. First, the adoption of the federalist framework is an interesting tool to theorize and explain the EU as a multi-level system of governance. Second, it provides a theoretical platform upon which the implementation of EU environmental policy and the 'leader-laggard' dynamic during the economic crisis can be better analyzed and interpreted.

4.1.3.2. Critical Realism and Methodological Approaches

The significance of the critical realist approach to my research is associated with the specific type of methodology and data collection as will be analyzed below. From a critical realist perspective, the provision of a clear interpretative framework on an empirical basis will demonstrate the causality of social interactions in those cases that cannot be observed (Marsh and Furlong, 2002). All this is to suggest that the use of elite interviews, documentary analysis and descriptive statistics are necessary for the conduction of this research in the study of the 'leader-laggard dynamic' (see Chapter 5 and 6). All the research data produced were critically analyzed, assessed and cross checked with the method of triangulation (see Data validity and triangulation below in this chapter). This process enables me to more accurately explain and analyze the 'leader-laggard' dynamic and the implementation of EU environmental policy during the economic crisis. First, by the use of elite interviews, I seek to investigate the policy outputs and analyze how EU environmental policy is implemented. Second, by documentary analysis, I pursue to explore both policy outputs and outcomes. More specifically, based on secondary data, I investigate how other studies/reports/documents have explained the relation of policy outputs and outcomes in order to compare them with my findings regarding the actual performance of member states and the two case studies. Third, by descriptive statistics, I analyze mainly the policy outcomes as emerge from the number of environmental infringements. However, in Chapter 5, an analysis of the policy outputs is provided respectively (see Figure 5.1.1. Categorization of Implementation deficit). The above discussion shows that all the methods employed for the existing research add particular value to the investigation of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic and the implementation of EU environmental policy during the economic crisis by the distinction of policy outputs and outcomes (see Chapter 5 and 6).

4.1.3.3. Primary vs Secondary Data

Following the analysis of the philosophical underpinnings of this research, data collection is a very arduous and laborious process which includes different strategies for social scientists (Neuman, 2002; Berg et al., 2004). The distinction between primary and secondary sources is necessary at this stage (Hox and Boeijs, 2005). Primary data is new information or original data collected for a particular research question or purpose and reported by the researcher or the owner of the idea (Keppel, 1991). Essentially, new knowledge is generated and added on the existing knowledge base (Mouton and Marais, 1988). A good example is the production of knowledge from experiments and social surveys. In this study, the use of elite interviewing is considered as a primary source of data. Secondary data essentially sum up the primary data. Some examples of secondary data are documents, encyclopedias, handbooks, textbooks, statistical indexes, reviews and syntheses, and journals (see the secondary data of this research in the appendix). In other words, it is material that is initially collected by a researcher (or public body) that can be reused or reproduced for other research purposes (Hakim, 1982). That being said, secondary data is the result of the processing and refinement of the original idea of the creator or researcher (Scott, 2014). With regard to this study, documentary analysis and descriptive statistics are used as secondary data for the study of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic and implementation of EU environmental policy.

From the evaluation of both primary and secondary data, it can be concluded that primary sources give a first-hand experience, introduce and develop the plan of research and give more details about the original idea of the researcher compared to secondary data (Creswell, 2013). Subsequently, secondary data provides a wide range of opportunities by enriching existing knowledge based on the development of new interpretations and explanations stemming from a combination of sources such as documents, publications, reports and statistical data. The significant contribution of secondary data is highly corroborated by this study as it draws upon many reports and documents from the European Commission (see the secondary data of this research in the appendix). A more detailed analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the methods used will be given below in this chapter.

4.2. Interviews in general

While the search for political scientists to interpret political phenomena is an overarching objective, the technique of interviews is a powerful tool offering a first-hand testimony largely seen in this study. The contribution of this type of research in the realm of political science, as expressed by numerous scholars (Lilleker, 2003; Burnham et al., 2004; Bryman, 2015), has added significant value, depth and breadth to qualitative research and in the examination of the 'Leader-Laggard' dynamic. According to Aberbach and Rockman (2002), interviews are very significant in explaining the nexus of perceptions, intentions, and actions of actors. In this study, the interactions and relations between the national and supranational level as well as the actors and the member states tasked with the implementation of EU environmental policy are clearly seen. Moreover, interviews for Lilleker (2003) shed light on matters that are less developed or where there is a gap in understanding. For all scholars, interviews arguably generate a huge amount of primary data and information that cannot be met easily in documents or books thus enriching research. However, interviews are accompanied by some restrictions that cannot be proclaimed as the only methodological approach. Data collection under these terms should be grounded in a multifaceted basis, where a greater sample of interviews will be required in order to provide validity. In this regard, the sample of interviews is composed of 26 participants from the whole environmental spectrum as will be analyzed below. By any account, as Lilleker (2003: 208) aptly argues, *'interviews can provide the means for expanding upon data and will add greater depth to a scientific analysis of an event and phenomenon'*. However, before analyzing the elite interviews it is necessary to determine what an elite is.

4.2.1. What is an elite?

A strong interest has been sparked amongst scholars in defining and explaining the role of elites in society and the business sector (Ostrander, 1993; Odendahl and Shaw, 2002; Littig, 2009; Morris, 2009; Rice, 2010; Mikecz, 2012). As Harvey (2011) contends, the study of the elite can be attributed to the development of ethnographic studies in the form

of focus groups, interviews, case studies and participant observation, as well as a growing trend amongst scholars to better perceive the attitude of elite members in a broad range of activities. Although there have been many efforts to spell out and stress the research gap in the social sciences, the study of the elite presents great opportunities for more inclusive research (Littig, 2009). A significant part of the literature on elite interviews is concerned with the identity of the elite, selection and access, and possible risks in the conduct of interviews (Odendahl and Shaw, 2002; Dexter, 2006; Goldman and Swayze, 2012). Another part of the existing literature is focused on the selection of interviewees and their classification based on their profession and expertise (Ostrander, 1993; Cochrane, 1998; Tansey, 2007).

The abundance of definitions in the literature enhances the understanding and approaches to the research of the elite (Richards, 1996; Aberbach and Rockman, 2002; Beamer, 2002; Goldstein, 2002; Kezar, 2003; Harvey, 2011). Therefore, one could infer that the variety of definitions rests on the diversity of participants. Although open to some debate, there is the belief that titled positions exude a sense of elitism in terms of specialty and knowledge. However, as Harvey (2010) points out, sometimes the distinction of professional titles may give a false account of the role of these people bear. More specifically, using the definition of Lilleker (2003: 207), it can be argued that, *“elites can be loosely defined as those with close proximity to power or policymaking; the category would include all elected representatives, executive officers of organizations and senior state employees.”* Beyond these, the problem arising from this definition is the exclusion of those working in NGOs and businesses. In a more detailed analysis, Zuckerman (1972), introduced the more complex concept of ‘ultra-elites’. This term is more inclusive and refers to the classification of eminent and dominant people who enjoy important power in a group. According to Woods (1998), the characterization of the elite is based on the ability to manage a range of resources as a result of the strong influence and high-level professional and social relationships. Having analyzed how the literature defines the elite above, my personal contribution to the understanding of this concept is centered on those who are specialized in a particular field and have high interpersonal connections that stem from their key position in their work environment.

4.2.2. Elite Interviews

A first clear guidance on how to gauge elite opinion is given by the seminal work of Dexter (2006), who argues that elite interviews aim to tap the views of those who are engaged in a direct way with political procedures. Expanding on this reasoning, Beamer (2002) argues that these people can act decisively in policy making, while the contact with them enlightens many aspects of particular political matters. In the same vein, Tansey (2007) argues that elite interviews reveal hidden aspects of political procedures that are not explicit in documents. For Burnham et al., (2004: 205) there is a strong nuance of power preponderance, *“Unlike, electoral studies where the balance of knowledge and expertise is usually in favor of the interviewer, elite interviewing is characterized by a situation in which the balance is usually in favor of the respondent”*. In accordance with the above, the use of elite interviews in this study highlights the role and significant contribution of the participants through their specific knowledge. This implies that the information given through the interview questionnaire revealed and clarified many of the organizational and administrative problems of implementation process in the member states.

Therefore, the main questions included in the questionnaire (see the interview questions in the appendix) derive from a careful consideration and analysis of the theoretical context along with the gaps from the literature (see Chapter 3). After a methodical and systematic review of the federal theory, the design of the questionnaire is based on four pillars. First, it starts with the broader context of EU Environmental policy with regard to its effectiveness, implementation, driving forces and the interaction of the EU with the member states. By doing that, the main scope is to introduce and cast light on the various changes in the procedures of legislation, monitoring, and implementation of EU environmental policy over time and during the economic crisis. This part is directly linked to the history of EU Environmental policy (questions 1-2, 4-5), the issue of ‘Leader – laggard dynamic in Chapter 2 (questions 5-6) and the different versions of federalism in Chapter 3 (see questions 3, 5-7 in part 3 of the questionnaire). In a subtle analysis, question number 3 focuses on fiscal federalism, questions 5-7 on cooperative and regulatory federalism respectively. Then, it goes on to explore the actual implementation practices, problems and difficulties at national and supranational level, namely in a multi-

level governance system. In section 4 of the questionnaire, all the questions are connected to the federal perspectives. In section 5 of the questionnaire, the general meaning of the questions aims to capture the impact of the economic crisis and austerity measures along with the ensuing dilemmas regarding the short and long-term ambitions of the member states. There is also the need to examine whether or not a divergence of environmental standards and possible costs exist and how these affect the implementation performance. More analytically, question 2 refers to cooperative federalism and questions 2-7 refer to both regulatory and fiscal federalism. Last but not least, in section 6 of the questionnaire, the main goal is to highlight the domestic environmental framework. These two questions are associated to a large extent with the cooperative and regulatory federalism. In effect, the above analysis means that the study meets the basic requirements (e.g. how it addresses the main research question through the formulation of sub-themes and sub-questions based on federalism). Hence, more accurate responses and strong conclusions are generated (see also the interview questionnaire in the appendix). In this vein, the coherence and compatibility of the data collection methods to the research problem are ensured (Rose and Sullivan, 1993; Singleton et al., 1993).

4.2.3. Techniques of Interviews

In view of a complete and tested research approach, interviews satisfactorily embody a pivotal role in data collection. However, what leads to successful data collection is distinguished by three different interview techniques: the structured, the unstructured and the semi-structured, where each of them has its own distinctive characteristics (Leech, 2002; Burnham et al., 2004; Seidman, 2013). Structured interviewing is based on an analytical and fixed series of questions followed by a rigorous context in terms of categorization and planning (Brinkmann, 2014). This technique is destined mainly for quantitative data collection, providing the opportunity for direct comparisons with the data collected in interviews. In the absence of a clearly structured and pre-fixed plan, the unstructured method draws its legitimacy from the interpretations of the interviewees. This approach lies in the understanding of the respondents, whose experience and ideas

considerably affect the development of the interview (Seidman, 2013). Finally, semi-structured interviewing would be characterized as a hybrid form of the two previous methods and one which harnesses the advantages and reduces the shortcomings of both (Roulston and Lewis, 2003). This technique has been employed in this research in order to better capture and analyze the responses of the participants. What makes it different from the other techniques is the high degree of flexibility, detailed analysis, and comparability. The conversational 'freestyle' gives leeway to the interviewees to develop their own views and respond more freely while creating a kind of familiarity and a more personal relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee (Wengraf, 2001; Harvey, 2011). Undeniably, due to the rapport established and the flexible structure of the interview, the information produced can be more revealing, including aspects that cannot be met so manifestly in other techniques, such as the richness of details surrounded by a strongly personal tone (Dexter, 2006). Finally, the diversity and convergence of views among the participants allow for comparability and more reliable conclusions. Factors such as the same group, position, agency, organization, competencies and duties enable the researcher to make comparisons, test the data and verify them based on what has been said (Arksey and Knight, 1999).

4.2.4. Open-ended Discussion

With a view to achieving the main research objectives, I adopted the method of open-ended questions structured around themes related to the research (see the interview questions in the appendix) because it offered me the opportunity of far-reaching conversations with the interviewees (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Seidman, 2013). Considering the functionality of this method, the primary goal was focused on the interpretation and analysis of their responses in the frame of implementation process and causal factors. More specifically, open-ended questions in the context of semi-structured interviews provided leeway to the respondents to express themselves more freely (Rapley, 2001). Admittedly, that made me more mindful due to the nature and quality of discussions which presuppose a more independent manner (Hoffmann, 2007). In practice, the comparative advantage of the semi-structured method of questioning used

in this study was the natural flow and freestyle of discussion that generated high-quality and insightful responses (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002). For example, the flow of the discussion revealed many hidden aspects (policy outputs) of the implementation process, and their persistence or avoidance stressed unavoidably specific aspects. Arguably, the stance of the informant was key for eliciting valuable data (Ritchie et al., 2013).

The main reflection on which method should be selected aligns with the description of Aberbach and Rockman (2002) that the selection of open-ended questions reveals three main characteristics which have been widely tested in this study. First, the extent of preceding research on the matter of interest (Patton, 1990, 2005). The lack of prior research on the 'leader-laggard' dynamic and the implementation of EU environmental policy during the economic crisis in member states and the more generic characteristics of that in other studies led me to the use of open-ended questions. Although closed-ended questions could to a certain extent serve the aims of the current research, the strict order and schedule would deprive of the flexibility, spontaneity, and normality of the responses (Fontana and Frey, 1994). Second, in an attempt to achieve greater data validity, the targeting of the elite attributed great value, high quality, and prestige to my research (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). However, some of the obstacles arising impinged on the increased difficulty in coding and analyzing the data. As a researcher, I was confronted with large amounts of data and technical terms, which made the processing and analysis a very complicated process. Third, a crucial aspect concerning the respondents' receptiveness is that the status of the interviewees requires particular treatment (Bryman, 2015). Given that I was largely dependent on the responses of the interviewee, in four cases noticed an uneven balance in favour of the latter by sending the interview questions half an hour before the interview.

Acknowledging that high profile people may avoid limiting themselves in sterile questions, it is appropriate not to insist on closed-ended questions for reasons of convenience and practicality (see also the interview questionnaire in the appendix). To some extent, that would cause significant problems in the conduct of interviews by confining the explanation to a superficial level and juxtaposing it in a mechanistic way (Berg, 2004). Meanwhile, it should not be overlooked that the positive side of using open-ended questions can be

overshadowed by some drawbacks. Initially, the conduct of interviews is associated with considerable costs in terms of time sufficiency for the establishment of interviews, coding and the analysis of data (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Additionally, costs in terms of money are very important because they include traveling and the purchase of specific gear, like a tape recorder for this research, and sometimes these costs may exceed the fixed budget allocated. Finally, significant delays can emerge due to time constraints to find participants.

4.2.5. Selection and gaining access of interviewees

A large part of the literature is occupied with the selection and approach of the elite (Ostrander, 1993; Leech, 2002; Delaney, 2007). A common perception is that the elite is generally self-selecting and allows access to the ones they desire. In this light, the sample size becomes smaller by the fact that the access to them is difficult and limited (Richards, 1996; Goldstein, 2002; Tansey, 2007; Bickman and Rog, 2008). Undoubtedly, the assumption that *'gaining access to elites is more difficult than approaching other people'* proved in my case to be largely true, especially in the initial stages (Seidman, 2013). While experiences may vary among the respondents, this reflects a set of different personal strategies followed. As Delaney (2007) suggests, one of the most crucial points for a researcher is to introduce his work to those who he wants to interview. Bearing in mind that the first impression is key for gaining rapport and ultimately acceptance, I wrote a comprehensive introductory email in which I briefly explained all the necessary details of my research topic by using simple terminology and reducing academic jargon (Dexter, 2006). Stressing the importance of elite interviews, my main target was to provide a good understanding of my research project, to make clear that the participation of each interviewee is unique and valuable for the progress of my research, and to simultaneously mitigate their concerns about anonymity and data protection (see the Ethical Considerations below in this chapter). In this regard, the sending of a research summary and the attachment of the consent form (see the consent form in the appendix) aimed to clarify any queries that may arise and help create a climate of mutual trust. The flexibility of dates provided for the arrangement of interviews was grounded in the reasoning that

elite members have busy schedules and severe time constraints (Morris, 2009). Finally, I offered also the opportunity to conduct the interview in different ways (in person, via telephone or skype) as in some cases distance played a key role. Attempting to include as many interviewees as possible the selection process did not encounter significant problems.

The principal aim when identifying participants was to find people from the higher echelons of the state and EU agencies, universities, international organizations, NGOs, and businesses relevant to the environmental sector (see the list of participants below in this chapter). The reason why I chose the above participants is that they represent the main mechanisms of refining the bulk of environmental decisions and are charged with the monitoring and/or implementation of EU environmental policy. Additionally, the selection of these people was mainly based on criteria such as their job position, responsibilities, active involvement, knowledge, experience and expertise. The interviews were very representative as I sought to secure diversity and depth, that is, a variety of groups and participants from the broader environmental spectrum and not to focus on one sector as this would create lots of problems regarding reliability, validity, and representativeness of the sample (see the list of participants below in this chapter). At the same time, this process also helped me avoid imbalances or overloading towards a specific direction. In accordance with Seldon and Pappworth (1983), there is always the risk that that method will only include respondents with similar characteristics. Although there is always the peril that the participants may deliberately stress continuously the strengths or downgrade their flaws and weaknesses of their work or agencies, the diversity of views constituted a very important tool as all the different views are hosted thus limiting significantly the risk of unilateralism as well as the rather excessive exposure of a particular viewpoint (see also Data Validity below in this chapter). Acknowledging that some respondents might have an interest in playing up the success of their work, I gave leeway and space to them to express freely. This enabled me to know more in detail the successes or failures of their agencies and distinguish any exaggerations or limitations. While this, at first glance, would be a risky gesture, I was very careful and critical in the end with the coding, analysis, and cross-checking of data through triangulation (see the method of triangulation below in this chapter). Having the time

advantage, I sought to identify potential overlaps or cases of defending sectoral interests by comparing their responses with people from the same or other departments, looking also at the existing literature, reports, documents and analyzing what they said during the interview.

Initially, all the participants were contacted by email. The stage of approaching in the early stages was characterized by particularly warm interest but a scant or little response. As a consequence, the initial excitement started to retreat and gave way to obvious concern and reflection after the low response rate. After a few positive responses in the first month and the arrangement of the first interviews, I felt a deep relief and pleasure that my project was finally taking shape. Therefore, I fully agree with Cochrane's (1998: 2124) vivid description that *"without gaining access, there can be no research, therefore the first acceptance already feels like success—a small victory"*. Seizing this opportunity, subsequently, I adopted the snowballing method or chain-referral sampling (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981; Berg, 1988; Tansey, 2007; Noy, 2008; Punch, 2013). With the adoption of that method, I was given the opportunity to expand my list of participants by harnessing the suggested referrals from the initial interviewees and building up my network. Considering the pitfalls that often arise, according to Harvey (2010) there are two areas in which a researcher should be very careful when searching for and approaching elite actors. First, flexibility is required in the planning of questions and meetings. As for the first part, I believe the flexibility included in the semi-structured interview and open-ended questions is evidence of my flexible strategy, as well as the arrangement of possible dates and meetings upon request. Second, the issue of transparency has particular weight in the context of ethics and gaining trust (Dexter, 2006). As mentioned earlier, I counteracted this risk by sending a brief research summary and the ethics form to interviewees.

Table 4.1.: List of Participants

Affiliation	Number of Interviews	Taped or Notes	Method
Greece			
Senior Officer of Local Environment Agency (1) (2)	2	Taped	In person
Officer of Local Environment Agency (3) (4)	2	Taped	In person
Special Advisors at the Environment Ministry (5) (6)	2	Taped Only Notes	In person
Senior Official at the Environment Ministry (7)	1	Only Notes	In person
Officer in Private Environmental Business (8)	1	Only Notes	In person
Senior Official of WWF Hellas (9)	1	Taped	Skype
Senior Official of Greenpeace Hellas (10)	1	Taped	Skype
UK			
Labour MP, Former Minister (11)	1	Taped	Phone
Senior officials from non-profit environmental	2	Taped	Skype

Institute (IEEP) (12) (13)			
Environmental (14)	1	Only Notes	Skype
Associate Fellow at the Center of European Reform (15)	1	Taped	In person
Officer at Natural England (16)	1	Taped	Phone
Environmental Regulator of the Environment Agency (England) (17)	1	Taped	Phone
Associate Professor of Ecosystem Services (18)	1	Taped	Phone
Senior Official on UK and EU Programs division WWF UK (19)	1	Taped	In person
EU			
Senior official in DG Environment of the European Commission (20)	1	Taped	Phone
Research Scientist of the EC in the Research Joint Centers of the	1	Taped	Skype

European Commission (21)			
Program Manager in the Joint Research Center of the European Commission (22)	1	Taped	Skype
Senior Official of the European Environment Agency (23)	1	Taped	Skype
Program Manager in the EU Specialized Agency (24)	1	Taped	Skype
Senior official of an environmental think-tank (EPE) (25)	1	Taped	Skype
European Conservation Officer (26)	1	Taped	Skype
Attempts for contact			
DEFRA UK	-	Due to busy schedules and time constraints they could not participate	-
Business Europe	-	Although they expressed initial interest, finally they did not take part in	-

4.2.6. Field Work

The fieldwork was conducted from September 2014 to March 2015 and was separated into three different sections in order of priority, starting with Greece, then the UK, and finally the EU. To begin with, the number of Greek participants amounted to ten. My fieldwork schedule in Greece included traveling in Athens, where I met with four respondents, in Kozani, with another four, and the remaining two interviews were carried out via skype. My interview experience in Greece was satisfactory overall but in some cases I was faced with reluctance due to the sensitivity of the issues discussed, as mentioned by the interviewees. The total number of interviews conducted in the UK was nine. Of these, four took place via skype, three via phone, and the remaining two in person in London and Woking. In comparison to Greece, in the UK I did not encounter any reluctance by the interviewees or problems throughout the interviews since all of them were very experienced accepting my request with enthusiasm. On the other hand, the interviews for the EU context - seven in total - were conducted entirely with the assistance of technology - one via phone and six via skype - mostly due to the long distance and strict budget constraints. Although some scholars (Burnham et al., 2004; Mikeszcz, 2012) argue that cultural differences may play a significant role, in my case, I did not have any problems as I was very familiar with the Greek and British culture. In total, the sample of interviews includes significant diversity but this does not mean that more interviews would not be needed. Additional interviews would possibly give different insights and more clarity, although I did reach a saturation point in terms of the same themes coming up.

4.2.7. Preparation and Conduct of Interview

Taking into account Zuckerman's (1972) remark that, intentionally or unintentionally, elite respondents might challenge researchers on the nature and relativity of the matter discussed, in the preparation stage of each interview, I tried to be well-prepared and informed about current developments, as required by the different fieldwork phases. This, arguably, included the literature review and specific reading on the area to which the interviewee was related. In this way, the main aim was to make them feel that they were

speaking to a fellow insider and then to gain their trust as a researcher for a fruitful conversation (Dexter, 2006). Considering that familiarity with the subject is for many scholars (Burnham et al., 2004; Stevens, 2007; Blakeley, 2013) a key to a good interview, I sought to avert any thoughts of wasting interviewee's time and posing unnecessary questions. Apart from that, I had to regularly check material equipment, such as stationery for taking notes and if the tape recorder is working properly, since any problems occurring during the interview may lead to the loss of valuable data.

Following the introductory email when approaching respondents, a summary of my research was given to the interviewees before the start of the interview in order to have a full picture of the topic discussed. In an attempt to collect real and not pre-constructed answers that have a strong nuance of spontaneity (Seldon and Pappworth, 1983), as a rule, I did not send the questions beforehand, with the exception of four cases when I was asked by the respondents to provide them as a prerequisite for their participation. At the beginning of the interview, having made sure that the interviewee had understood the objective of the research, I then analyzed the procedural character of the interview, followed by some questions on their availability, recording, taking notes etc. (May, 2011). At the end of each interview, the respondent was asked whether s/he wishes to receive a transcript of the interview for his/her record, to check the originality and validity of his/her responses, to add anything that had not been mentioned over the course of the interview and make clarifications where needed (McCracken, 1988). It is worth mentioning that in one case, a participant from the UK, provided me with an extra reading material in the form of reports. In concluding, a thank you letter was sent to all the interviewees for their time, contribution and cooperation. As Mikecz (2012: 491) argues, *"this gesture not only served as a reminder in case the interviewee offered additional help, such as reports or additional contacts during the interview, but also kept the door open for follow-up interviews"*. In this regard, I fully agree with Welch et al. (2002) that collaboration after the completion of the interview is useful because the sending of interview transcripts to the respondent may require clarification and further comments. In spite of the formal rules, the emotional character of this procedure was reflected in the emails received, in which some of them expressed their pleasure in participating in my research.

The average length of each interview was about an hour and less than half of them exceeded that limit. While interruptions can be seen as part of the interview process (Stedward, 1997), in three interviews held in respondents' office problems of continuity occurred due to the influence of external factors, such as the phone ringing and urgent departmental meetings that delayed the process. Following the advice of Rubin and Rubin (1995: 7) that "*Qualitative interviewing requires listening carefully enough to hear the meanings, interpretations, and understandings that give shape to the worlds of the interviews*", the open and free style discussion led me to new topics. Acknowledging that keeping a balance between me as a researcher and the respondent is a difficult task during the talk, I tried to remain neutral (Harrison et al., 2001). While the issue of controlling the interview has been researched by many scholars (Ostrander 1993), there were only two cases where I found myself being asked by the respondent about the structure of my questions, in which they dictated the way at some point, such as "*it is vague, can you narrow it down please*".

4.2.8. Telephone and Skype Interviews

Conducting most of the interviews via telephone and skype helped me understand at first hand the main differences to face-to-face interviews (Irvine, 2011; Hanna, 2012; Weinmann et al., 2012; Deakin and Wakefield, 2014). While most of the literature is focused on the traditional ways of conducting interviews and, to a lesser extent, on telephone interviews, there has not been so much reference on skype interviews (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004; Stephens, 2007; Holt, 2010; Harvey, 2011; Mikecz, 2012). Sharing the same view as Stephens (2007: 203) that telephone interviewing is "*both a productive and valid research option*", I noticed that through telephone and skype interviews I had better and direct control of the conversation compared to face-to-face interviews, mostly as a result of non-visual contact. However, the assumption that telephone interviews can be poorer in detail than face-to-face interviews was also true in my case (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004). That would be explained in the context that telephone interviews are shorter in duration. Faced with the risk of missing interviews and acknowledging the geographical distance of participants, the flexibility in interviewing by telephone or skype

gave me the opportunity to organize them at a significantly lower cost due to budget constraints (Shuy, 2002; Harvey, 2011).

4.2.9. Recording the Interviews or Taking Notes

The contrasting views on recording interviews or taking notes that stem from the literature reflect significantly the different preferences amongst scholars (Peabody, 1990; Byron, 1993; Aberbach and Rockman, 2002; Harvey, 2011). My decision to carefully use tape-recording was dependent on factors such as easing the way of conversation and curtailing any possible loss of information. For this process, it was very important to secure the consent of the respondent (Blakeley, 2013). In my case, 4 out of 26 interviewees did not give their permission to be recorded. Although the appearance of a tape recorder may cause nervousness and anxiety in the way the interviewees respond, from their answers it does not seem to have significantly affected (Zuckerman, 1972; Hart, 1989).

One of the main advantages of recording is the provision of a verbatim transcript of the interview and the actual interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee (Richards, 1996). Recording the interview gave me the opportunity to focus not only on the details, uniqueness, and responses of the interviewee but also on my sentiments, comprehension and stance that influenced the explanation and interpretation of data (Mikecz, 2012). In so doing, I attempted to minimize information loss and misinterpretation and to accurately quote what the respondent said (Seldon and Pappworth, 1983). At the same time, it allowed me to draw my attention to body language, such as eye contact to increase rapport. As Mikecz (2012: 488) aptly articulates, *“sometimes, the intonation of the interviewee’s voice, his posture, and facial expression would express more than his words”*. Another advantage is that transcribing the interview gave me the opportunity to reflect on the content as well as the way the respondent expressed himself during the interview, including facial characteristics, feelings, and interruptions. Meanwhile, during the interviews, I took notes to stress the most important things and to make sure that in the case of technical problems with the tape recorder a full account of the meeting and interview would be kept. Taking notes is not just capturing everything said but an elegant

way to control the interview. More specifically, there is a sense that the more notes the interviewer takes, the better impression is shaped by the interviewee due to the high importance of data produced. There is also the belief that the lack of notes may be seen by the interviewee as low interest (Olander, 1995). In my case, along with the note-taking, a detailed account of the procedural characteristics of the interview was kept, such as date, time, venue and a brief progress report, for reflection and further improvements.

4.2.10. Interview Analysis

Analyzing the interview data is a demanding and challenging process for each researcher. To begin with, all the interviews taped were transcribed by myself, either shortly after or within one day of the end of each interview along with the notes taken. In those cases, where permission for recording was not given, only the use of notes was appropriate. In this regard, the interview notes were fleshed out with details, either at a neighbouring café or at home, while my memory was fresh and could more easily recall particular parts of the interview (Blakeley, 2013). Another reason for the quick transcription of interviews was to record as clearly as could be the emotional and psychological factors as well as the environment of the interview, such as the surroundings, the sentiments, and expressions. Inter alia, this part was of great interest because I could provide my own perspective and opinion on the outcome, such as annotations and clarifications. As Harrison et al., observe (2001: 102), *'the transcription process for me proved crucial in that it allowed me to become "familiar" with my data by milling over them time and again'*.

Following the transcription process, I started coding the data to single out topics. As Burnham et al., (2004: 103) argue, *'the data from open-ended questions is much more difficult and time-consuming to code and the coders need clear instructions to avoid miscoding'*. Having already constructed a semi-structured questionnaire (see the interview questions in the appendix), there was, to some extent, a kind of atypical order but it was not enough to provide me with clear categorization. Therefore, I segregated each interview into themes and placed a keyword on them from which I could identify the descent and the connection with the question. Subsequently, after having completed this

process with all the interviews, I created sub-groups, entitled, for example, according to the main drivers, the impact of the economic crisis, tradeoffs, and economic status, in order to gather and place all the responses that addressed that issue with the name of each interviewee. With the completion of this stage, I had a clear mapping out of my data that allowed me to continue with the interpretation and explanation of data. At all times of the writing process, I constantly re-visited the interview transcripts so as to check that I included everything.

4.2.11. Advantages and Disadvantages of Elite Interviewing

Having extensively discussed what elite interviewing is and its procedural steps, the pros and cons will be analyzed below. Four main advantages were observed in my research by the use of elite interviewing. First, elite actors can provide valuable information about particular topics (Tansey, 2007). For the purposes of this research, the interviews with the elite actors enhanced my knowledge about the capacity of the public administration to implement policies, the role of the NGO community and the economic costs for countries that have financial problems. According to some scholars (Seldon and Pappworth, 1983; Davies, 2001), a second advantage is that elite interviewing can assist in disclosing aspects and details of policy processes, as well as explaining factors, actions, and outcomes that influence decision making. Arguably, their contribution to my research was very important in terms of analyzing the endogenous and exogenous drivers and the various problems such as the fragmentation of policy structures and misallocation of competences in Greece leading to implementation failures during the economic crisis. Third, for much of the literature (Seldon and Pappworth, 1983; Seldon, 1988; Richards, 1996) elite participants can give a more personal character to the information provided. In many cases, I felt that the responses of the interviewees were reflecting a deep and strong personal tone deriving from their work experience and active involvement in the implementation process (see Chapter 6). Fourth, for some scholars such as Richards, (1996) and George and Benett, (2005) elite interviewees can also offer exceptional opportunities in seeking organizational connections. As mentioned earlier in

this chapter, some of them introduced me to people (snowballing method) who contributed significantly to my research thus increasing my list of participants.

At the other end of this pendulum, some of the main disadvantages or problems met in this research, according to the literature (Manheim and Rich, 1981; Seldon and Pappworth, 1983: 20-21; Richards, 1996; Drost, 2011) were the provision of unreliable information by a respondent because of his weak memory, the weak understanding of the questions, the frequent change of mind during the interview, and the purposeful misrepresentation of information aimed at securing interests. More specifically, two participants from Greece, surprisingly, did not understand very well some of the questions thus touching upon other trivial or irrelevant issues, such as policy making and one of them due to frequent changes of his mind gave a more blurred picture of the implementation process that led me to ask for more clarifications. I also felt that the same respondent was trying in his responses to secure the interests of his department due to poor performance. At this point, it is no exaggeration to say that some of the interviewees appeared reticent in their responses, especially in Greece due to reasons of sensitivity as stated during the interview. Although the issue of reliability constitutes the essence of the research (see the method of triangulation below), the above disadvantages were not necessarily a problem in data validation as I cross checked them with some other people from the same department, documents and reports (see the method of triangulation below in this chapter). Acknowledging these problems, I systematically aimed to secure objectivity and transparency at all stages as there is always the risk of the temerity and formulation of the questions, the bias in interpretation, and questions that lead to predetermined answers (see the method of triangulation below). Simultaneously, while a part of the literature refers to the interviewer and his constraints that arise from the degree of obedience and respect against the interviewee, I sought to be very careful in terms of not showing excessive deference or dependence but to remain neutral as my research position required (Richards, 1996). Significant barriers can also emerge from the power relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer. The power balance may incline to the side of interviewee due to concerns of denial or the premature end of the interview. Gaining access to an elite member of society may ensnare the interviewer to adopt the agenda of the respondent (Hertz and Imber, 1995; Cochrane, 1998; Phillips, 1998).

Taking into account that credibility and transparency are primary goals of my research as analyzed above I pursued to remain neutral despite the fact that in four cases I sent the questions half an hour before the interview in order to secure their participation. Apart from these reasons, this would be high-risk and detrimental for my research due to self-manipulation. However, at any stage of the interview process, I did not adopt the agenda of the interviewees for reasons of objectivity and reliability. As my confidence and assertiveness grew over time, it helped me to overcome these barriers.

4.3. Documentary Analysis

4.3.1. What is documentary analysis?

Documentary analysis is the methodological process in which an evaluation and assessment of documents and reports take place, including of electronic and printed sources (Bowen, 2009). According to Tim May (2011: 191-192), *“documents, read as sedimentations of social practices, have the potential to inform and structure the decisions which people make on a daily and longer-term basis; they also constitute particular readings of social events. They tell us about the aspirations and intentions of the periods to which they refer and describe places and social relationships at a time when we may not have been born, or were simply not present”*. A document is an easy source of data that symbolizes on paper the conception, embodiment, and blossoming of a set of ideas and deep thinking. Hence, they are divided into two categories, public and private documents. The category of public documents includes minutes of meetings, formal notices, newspapers, public records, and archives. Subsequently, private documents represent diaries and journals, personal notes, letters, biographies (Creswell, 2013: 245). It may be argued that such documents have an informative and inductive role by creating a picture of a condition or an individual (Briggs and Coleman, 2007; Scott, 2014; Silverman, 2016). The examination of documents offers valuable data because it allows the researcher to read the discourse between the lines, interpret the messages and draw conclusions from the content (Fairclough, 2003; Patton, 2005). Likewise, documentary analysis is subject to consideration and interpretation by the researcher with a view to

providing explanations, a good understanding and obtaining empirical knowledge (Merriam, 1988; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Ritchie et al., 2013). One of the main ways by which documents were used in this research was for the production of graphs and tables in empirical chapters 5 and 6 about the implementation patterns and failures in member states. The data were collected mainly from the official European Commission reports and documents such as the Annual Reports (24th – 33rd) on Monitoring the Application of EU law and descriptive statistics as will be seen below with the use of environmental infringements from the official website of the Directorate-General Environment of the European Commission from 2006 until 2014²⁷ (see the secondary data in the appendix).

Taking into account the fact that documents can variously be used for the aims of the research, it is worth mentioning initially some of their advantages. More explicitly, according to some scholars (McCulloch, 2004; Briggs and Coleman, 2007; Fitzgerald, 2007; Bowen, 2009: 30-31), documents can provide significant information and data, such as names, dates, facts, and references, as well as a text providing framework about the main role and functions of actors and institutions. In accordance to that, the study of documents and reports on the implementation process provided me an explanatory context and an in-depth analysis of the ‘top-down’ approach, the interaction, task allocation and distribution of power between the EU and member states contributing decisively to a better understanding. A significant comparative advantage of this method is the focus on data selection than data collection, whereby it can be more efficient, thus requiring less time in relation to other research approaches (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006; Bailey, 2008). The use of various sources, such as the internet, library catalogues, textbooks, newspapers, reports and academic journals, were particularly preferred for my research due to reasons of easy accessibility, availability and saving time. For some scholars such as Patton (2005) the cost seems to be lower in comparison to other research approaches. Acknowledging that the generation and collection of new data are frequently accompanied by higher costs such as the elite interviews above, the analysis of documents and reports helped me base my research on already existing work and be more effective in terms of time management by focusing on those aspects that were

²⁷ DG Environment/European Commission, Date of access: 15/02/2015, <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/law/statistics.htm>.

under-explored such as the role of the UK as a purported 'leader' and Greece as a traditional 'laggard', the organizational structure of public administration and the impact of the economic crisis. Moreover, documents seem to be unchanged by any obtrusiveness, having a more static character (Scott, 2014). Because of this stability, the subject studied can be reiterated without so much interference by the researchers (Strauss, 1987). Arguably, the use of secondary data as mentioned above helped me see what others have written and then to fill in data that were either missing or not fully covered in elite interviews (see Data Validity below in this chapter). Consequently, I fully agree with Yin (1994) and Bowen (2009) that secondary data can be used as an indicator for identifying changes and possible improvements.

Despite the positive aspects of documentary analysis, this is not to say that there are no disadvantages. Indeed, a number of problems which may limit the effectiveness of the approach have been observed. First, documents may have gaps in analyzing facts and events resulting in incomplete and inaccurate descriptions. It is, thus, common to provide poor analysis on a specific issue (Ritchie et al., 2013). During my data collection and while I was studying reports, documents, textbooks etc., I was confronted with the issue of how recent the publications for my research are. In some cases, I felt that the comparison between the older and newer versions of documents included significant changes in terms of details and analysis. This fact, inevitably, increased my attention to look for the latest versions in order to keep up with the current developments on EU implementation patterns. Therefore, I believe that the analysis of documents can in many respects be a valuable means to support research findings or prove their validity or substantiate the existing evidence stemming from other sources (see Data Validity below in this chapter). Similarly, this may also be due to the fact that documents serve a broader context of functions without being strictly confined to a sole issue. Second, a common obstacle amongst researchers is the low retrievability and, in some cases, accessibility can be intentionally hampered (Bowen, 2009; Creswell, 2013). While researchers very often have difficulties in locating and obtaining the material required for their study, these documents may be sometimes not accessible to the public due to restrictions such as the exclusive permission of the author. In my case, due to limited access and older versions of this journal in the library of the University of Exeter I visited the British Library in London

to find the latest versions of the academic journal (ENDs Report) which means more costs and traveling for my research. Beyond that, I did not have any other accessibility problems in terms of finding secondary data in other archives, including traveling and costs as I used extensively the sources of the library of the University of Exeter. Third, partial, preferential and limited selection of documents can raise issues of biased selectivity, implying specific incentives and purposes (Fitzgerald, 2007). As a researcher, I pursued to include a wide range of secondary sources of data in order to avoid biased selectivity and raise impartiality and objectivity in my critiques. Otherwise, this would imply a deliberate action to distort and pre-define final outcomes.

4.4. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics is a resourceful tool in the political scientist's toolkit, either as a preliminary part of a more sophisticated analysis or a stand-alone research (Burnham et al., 2004: 141). Descriptive statistics is a branch of statistics and a form of analysis for summarizing, describing and presenting data in a meaningful way with the use of tabulation, graphical representation and statistical parameters (Burnham et al., 2004). For the purpose of this thesis, descriptive statistics are complementary to the elite interviews and documentary analysis. More specifically, I made use of tabulation and graphical representation of the environmental infringements in empirical chapters 5 and 6. As mentioned above, these were compiled from the official European Commission data sets such as the Annual Reports on Monitoring the Application of EU law and the statistical analyses of DG Environment²⁸. The use of environmental infringements is a key indicator as it clearly shows the problem in delivering specific policy goals and resulting in implementation failures (see Chapter 5 and 6). In this regard, the role of environmental infringements (policy outcomes) operates as a tool that measures the deviation from the existing institutional framework with some implications for humans and environment from the bad or non- application of EU environmental law. Additionally, environmental infringements, apart from illustrating the policy outcomes (see Chapter 5 and 6),

²⁸ DG Environment/European Commission, Date of access: 15/02/2015, <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/law/statistics.htm>.

essentially direct us, as researchers, to explore and analyze also the policy outputs (as explained by the elite interviews above). In so doing, a more comprehensive picture of the policy implementation is provided.

Some of the main advantages and disadvantages of this approach met in this thesis are analytically developed below. The main advantages of this method unfold as follows. First, descriptive statistics summarize large amounts of data and assist in the arrangement and visualization of data (Burnham et al., 2004). The graphical and numerical depiction (see Chapter 5 and 6) of the total number of environmental infringements (policy outcomes) and their breakdown country by country and at EU level on a yearly basis provides a concrete record that makes easier to the reader to understand, remember, capture and analyze the main tendencies and fluctuations throughout the economic crisis. Second, they give voice to data and are amenable to various interpretations and discussions (Stevens, 2012). The analysis of the environmental infringements gave me the opportunity to explain in-depth the country per country policy outcomes as well as their dynamics by making comparisons across the EU countries and my two case studies, (Greece and the UK) (see Chapter 5 and 6). Third, the variation of the number of the environmental infringements during the economic crisis formed the basis of a rigorous and advanced analysis and therefore the examination of the policy outputs and outcomes along with the endogenous and exogenous driving forces that lead to implementation failure in member states in Chapter 5. Fourth, they offer economy of time and cost, reliability, and precision (Sirkin, 2005). In comparison to elite interviews, the data collection with the use of descriptive statistics proved to be quicker with significantly fewer costs. Additionally, they offered high credibility and accuracy into my research as they were already subject to rigorous scrutiny from the official European Commission data sets as mentioned above.

On the other hand, the disadvantages are focused on certain aspects. First, descriptive statistics can be misused, misinterpreted and incomplete (Burnham et al., 2004). Given that the graphical representations and tables contain condensed data the need to accurately explain, for example, the policy outcomes may lead to misinterpretations or poor analysis. Second, descriptive statistics may offer little information about the causes

and effects (Stevens, 2012). Due to a limited dataset in the third section of Chapter 5, the policy outputs and outcomes at the EU level are compared only with the policy outcomes at the level of EU member states. Similarly, the lack of country by country data of policy outputs as seen in Chapter 6 with the two case studies may create some gaps in understanding about their influential role and thus incomplete conclusions. In this regard, they provide a comprehensive analysis only on the policy outcomes. Third, the development of descriptive statistics may be dangerous if not analyzed completely (Black, 1999). Related to the previous point, the lack of data in the category of 'Impact' and 'Others' in Chapter 5 (see Figure 5.2.2.: Environmental Infringements by sector) may lead to a less detailed description. Fourth, a failure to clearly categorize the different sectors may result in a vague analysis and interpretations (Sirkin, 2005). In my case, I did not encounter significant problems as the categorization of sectoral infringements was very clear in the statistical analyses of the European Commission.

4.5. Data Validity

After the completion of data collection and analysis, the next step is to validate the accuracy of the findings, which is paramount. In general, validity is recognized as a fundamental problem of the theory (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). Validity and reliability are simply means to understand the complexity of measurements on causes and effects in theory and applied research. The researcher is responsible for securing the accuracy, reliability, and trust of the findings by using specific approaches like triangulation and member confirmation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Creswell and Miller, 2000). According to Steven Downing (2003: 830), "*validity refers to the evidence presented to support or refute the meaning or interpretation assigned to assessment results*". Reasonably, it is now understood that all findings need evidence to prove their validity. Bearing in mind that everything related to research cannot be perfectly calibrated, maintaining a degree of subjectivity makes the task of checking even more significant. Under these terms, validity and reliability are strong pillars of scientific research (Moss, 1994; Riege, 2003).

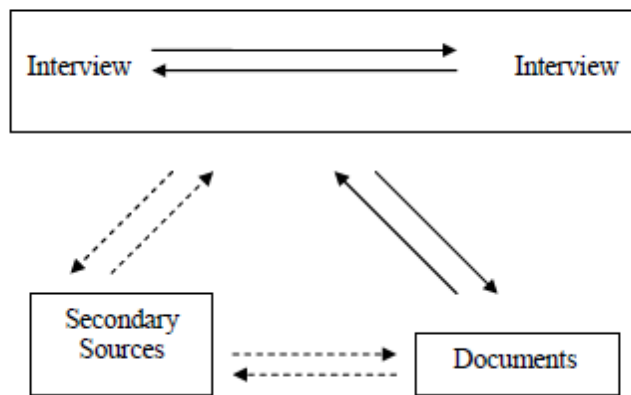
Reliability refers to the process of replicating the same experiment more than once with the same conditions and producing the same results (Carmines and Zeller, 1979; Merriam, 1995). Therefore, this process strengthens the findings by fulfilling the formal research probation. Validity encloses the idea of experiment and demonstrates whether the results generated are compliant with the prerequisites of the research methods (Kvale, 1995; Drost, 2011). Internal validity defines the structure of an experimental plan and includes the necessary stages of the scientific research approach (Campbell, 1986; Godwin et al., 2003). External validity investigates the results and searches for other possible relationships (Calder et al., 1982; Rothwell, 2005). Content validity deals with the adequacy of the content (Holsti, 1969; Brod et al., 2009). In the context of the research community in general and this thesis in particular, validity and reliability are very important elements demonstrating that the research conducted has accurately reported findings and the interpretations are underpinned by strong evidence.

4.5.1. Triangulation

Triangulation would be best explained as the technique in which *'if one side and two angles of a triangle are known, the other two sides and angle can be readily calculated'*²⁹ (Britannica, 2016). In the social sciences, the main research scope of triangulation is to employ two or more variables to reinforce the capacity for the interpretation of the findings (Denzin, 1970; Jonsen and Jehn 2009). In simple words, it is the mix of two or more informants, data sources, or channels applied in the same study for the analysis and verification of data produced (Denzin, 1970; Kimchi et al., 1991). As can be seen in the figure below, triangulation has different pathways to verify the findings. These can be checked directly through interviews, interviews, and documents, documents and secondary sources, interviews and secondary sources or combination of all.

²⁹ Date of access: 18/06/2016, <https://www.britannica.com/science/triangulation-trigonometry>

Figure 4.1: Triangulation sources



Source: Davies (2001:78)

For many researchers, a vexed issue is how to achieve validity of their results. Triangulation is offered as one of those methods that provide high validity and stringency of research (McFee, 1992; Davies, 2001; Golafshani, 2003; Humble, 2009). The basic claim is that the validity of research findings is corroborated in the case when at least two or more independent sources seem to be aligned or do not oppose each other (Johnsen and Jehn, 2009). In this context, triangulation serves the aim of verification, which rests on a set of stable, ordinary cross-checks of theoretical approaches, justification, judgements, strategies, findings and the researcher. According to the existing literature, the adoption of triangulation is very important for a number of reasons (Denzin, 1978; Thurmond, 2001; Griffie, 2005). First, it aims to obliterate or diminish biases and at the same time to achieve and increase the reliability and validity of the inquiry (Downing, 2003). Second, it seeks to enrich the conciseness and provide a more integrated understanding of the research objective (Kane, 2001). Third, it is the action of enhanced confidence concerning the outcomes derived from triangulation for researchers. On the other hand, some of the disadvantages are centered on the time-consuming nature of this method in relation to single approaches. Moreover, the high volume of data may create problems of efficient management. Following this, there is always a risk of misinterpretation stemming from the researcher's prejudgments (Thurmond, 2001).

The deployment of elite interviews in qualitative research presupposes that the use of primary and secondary sources is vital in the interpretation and validation of data. Based on the assumption of Davies (2001: 77) that “*alternative primary sources are not always available, and in a number of cases, interview data may be the only form of data available, or interview data coupled to information from secondary sources*”, it is evident that the method of triangulation provides a firm ground. Regarding my thesis, data validity is grounded in the triangulation of primary sources, including interviews and secondary sources like documents and reports. Throughout the course of my fieldwork, I conducted 26 interviews with a number of key actors from the environmental, governmental, business and academic fields, whose input added particular value to my research. More specifically, I paid particular attention to cross-checking data coming from within and between the data sources, as clearly seen in the graph above. Concerning the primary sources (elite interviews), the participants originated from different groups classified by their status and position, in which similarities and opposing views were met. In some cases, I have interviewed more than one person from the same department which gave me the opportunity to test the validity and reliability of their responses from within that group by comparing what was being said (see the list of participants above).

In other cases, the repetition and the similar way of responding constituted a strong sign of verification. That being said, a degree of consistency was attained in many of my interviews. Likewise, I noticed, as Griffiee (2005) put forward, that some of their responses were imbued by a progressive and directional evolution, which in turn added a significant degree of validity in the interpretation of data. In other cases, where I interviewed only one person in each department I tried to cross-check the validity through reports and documents, whereas any possible deviation or convergence would be perceived as a sign of confirmation or refusal. At the same time, I also had some outside perspectives, such as those from NGOs, which helped significantly in cross-checking my data. It is telling that most of the officials I spoke to either had a deep and thorough knowledge and understanding of the topic researched or active participation. Indisputably, the responses from the interviews could be partly confirmed by the availability of documentary sources. In those cases, where significant differences were identified between the interviews and

official public records, the use of documents and reports was considered to be the most appropriate means.

4.5.2. Other Validation Methods

Although triangulation has been employed as the main validation method, other approaches were also used respectively (Silverman, 2016). Acknowledging the value of interviews and documentary sources for drawing reliable data and conclusions, I examined the data produced from a critical perspective, since many factors can intervene and affect the final outcome. Any omissions can be extremely harmful and lead to a false picture regarding the character and aims of the research itself. Many agree, not unfairly, that elite interviews are a difficult process implying the issue of reliability (Carmines and Zeller, 1979; Drost, 2011). Being aware of these risks in the interpretation of data was necessary to understand the deeper meaning of the interview data and depict largely the subjective views based on personal experience, ideas, impressions and memories of a range of issues. Simultaneously, bearing in mind the subjectivity of views contained in interviews I became very critical of content and analysis of the additional factors, such as the stance and behaviour of the respondents (Richards, 1996). In order to avoid interpretative preconceptions and pitfalls, the information provided by the interviews was not addressed as factual but as the interpretation and reading of the existing system and world (see above The Philosophical Framework of this Research). Moreover, preparation for interviews, including prior research and study on the points I wanted to mention, helped me focus on little details, such as the method of questioning, which could make a difference to the accuracy of the responses (Bryman, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, anxiety and nervousness from both sides at the very beginning of the interview process have played a crucial role regarding issues of rapport and trust (Roulston and Lewis, 2003). Equally important was the fact that writing a summary at the end of each interview about the overall progress made me have a clearer view and be more critical in the process of interpreting data. Apart from the evaluation of the interview itself, I also included other factors, such as behaviour, stance, and feelings, which turned

out to be very important to reach firm conclusions (Denzin, 2001). Through this process, it was easier to identify the strengths and weaknesses of both sides. Another reason is the risk of misinterpretation of data, especially in those cases where the interviewees refused to be recorded and allowed me only to take notes (Kvale, 2006). Under these circumstances, I was very careful with the use and analysis of these data because in comparison with the recorded interviews the risk was higher due to limited data. For the interviews recorded, my notes were used as the means to validate them by focusing on the similarities and differences (Mears, 2009). To gain more validity, at the end of each interview, each interviewee was asked if he/she wanted a verbatim transcript or the notes taken to check what was said during the interview. By that gesture, I aimed to greatly reduce the possibilities of misinterpretation and to allow the interviewees to provide any clarifications or additions to the information given. At the same time, it was a good opportunity to pose supplementary questions, acting as a vestibule for the final decision by the interviewees. In four cases, interviewees sent me back the edited version of the transcript with some clarifications that were necessary as concluding remarks.

4.6. Ethical Considerations

A key term and condition for the conduct of my research were ethics approval from the University of Exeter, which I successfully passed (see the consent form in the appendix). In an attempt to secure and provide safeguards for both sides (me as interviewer and the interviewee) and achieve the successful completion of the interviews, my ethical considerations were based upon anonymity, data protection and the purposes of my research (Munhall, 1988; Miller et al., 2012). To avoid potential risks during the interview process, in the first contact by e-mail I informed the participants about the issues of confidentiality, the use and storage of data and the intention of my research. After having obtained their consent, I proceeded to arrange the meeting for the interview as well as available dates and locations. Simultaneously, I made clear that the participant could withdraw at any time. Moreover, the issue of anonymity was highly important for the purposes of this research and only on request would the name of the interviewee be

published (Israel and Hay, 2006). Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of the respondents asked to remain anonymous, arguing that much of the information contained sensitive aspects, as discussed earlier in this chapter. As a consequence, many interviewees expressed the view that it would be easier to give honest and accurate answers under the status of anonymity. Respecting their request, I considered necessary for even those who accepted the public use of their name to remain anonymous for reasons of self-protection, respect, and equal treatment. In this regard, interview data were held and used on an anonymous basis in accordance with the United Kingdom data protection regulations, with no mention of the name but with a reference to the stakeholder group or affiliation of which the interviewee is a member. Similarly, all the participants are coded according to their background (e.g., officer, special advisor etc.) (Punch, 2013). With regard to data security, I provided assurances that any recordings of interviews and typed interview transcripts would be encrypted and stored on a secure hard drive for four years after the end of the research. Subsequently, I reassured the participants that the results of this research would be used for academic purposes, such as my Ph.D. thesis and publications in academic journals, excluding commercial or other interests that might damage this research. Finally, it is appropriate to stress that the funding of this research was granted by the Greek State Scholarships Foundation (IKY), a non-profit organization that is a state-owned institution that provides scholarships for new researchers.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, this chapter has presented and examined the diversity of methods employed for the purposes of this thesis. The basic intention of this analysis was to explain and elucidate all the aspects of the conduct of this research. To begin with, in the first section, research design, epistemology and the analytical context of elite interviews along with its procedural steps set the foundations for a broader understanding and clarification of the reasons for the use of this method. The methodological development of elite interviews has emphasized the interaction and generation of information and data through people who are specialists. Thereafter, documentary analysis and descriptive

statistics in the second part appear to have mostly an auxiliary role to support the elite interviews. Documentary analysis proved to be undeniably critical in the interpretation of data along with the utility of descriptive statistics. In an attempt to corroborate the reliability and validity of data, the third part of this chapter dealt with the method of triangulation and other validation strategies. Based on these methods, the main scope was to ensure the validity of data and minimize the risks and various problems that may arise. Finally, in the last part ethical considerations touched upon and analyzed the fundamental issues of this research, such as anonymity and data protection, which was necessary for both sides to be aware of prior to the interviews. After the completion and development of the methodological approaches used in this research, the following chapters 5 and 6 will show the empirical results of this thesis. More specifically, the next chapter, chapter 5, serves the first objective of this thesis, which is the mapping out of the broader EU patterns of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic following the 2008 "credit crunch".

Chapter 5 – Implementation patterns in the EU member states

Introduction

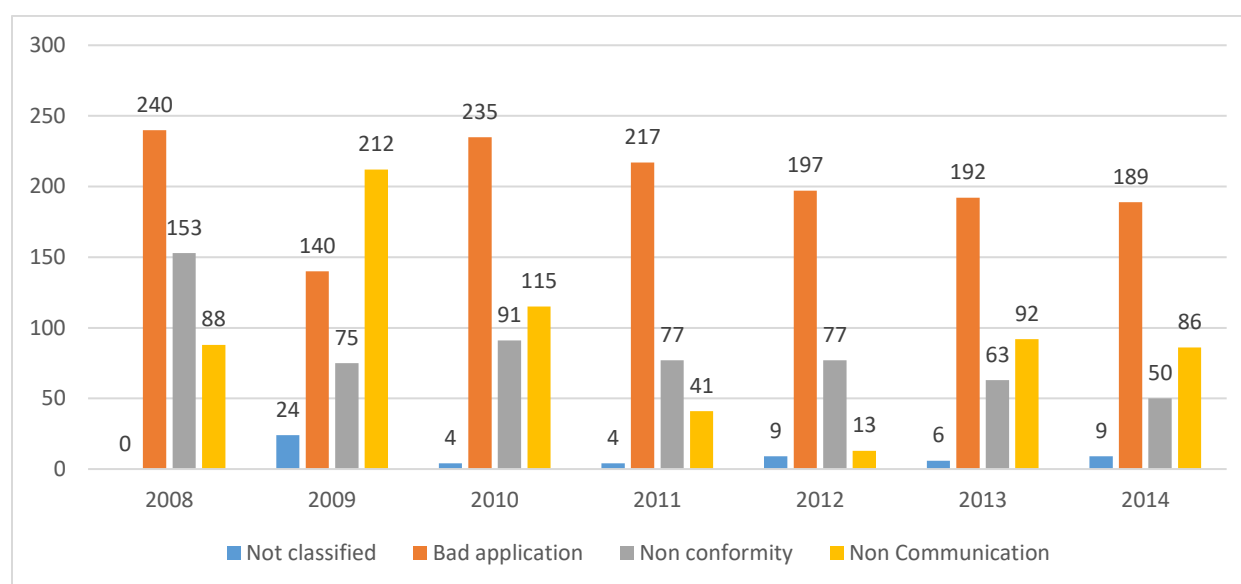
Building and adding upon the existing literature in Chapter 2, the primary goal of this chapter and second of this thesis is to develop and map out the broader implementation patterns of EU environmental policy in the member states during the economic crisis by highlighting the factors affecting implementation deficit. For the purpose of this study, as extensively referred to in the methodology (see Chapter 4), the use of 26 elite interviews, documentary analysis, and descriptive statistics (environmental infringements) will provide a fresh look at the 'leader-laggard' dynamic and develop a better understanding of the implementation of EU environmental policy. First, I will break down the policy outputs and outcomes at the EU level considering the additional factors related to the economic crisis. Second, I shall compare the policy outputs and outcomes at the EU level with the policy outcomes at the level of EU member states. Third, I will analyze the exogenous and endogenous drivers before I assess how all these factors have affected EU environmental performance and implementation deficit.

5.1. Policy outputs

In this section, I shall analyze the policy outputs at the EU level derived from the descriptive statistics (environmental infringements) of the European Commission combined with the data from the 26 elite interviews (see the list of participants in Chapter 4). Building upon the existing literature (Lampinen and Uusikylä, 1998; Jordan, 1999; Knill and Lenschow 2000; Holzinger et al., 2006, 2011; Knill and Liefferink, 2007) the categorization of implementation deficit is demonstrated to rest primarily on bad application of policies and non-compliance due to the existence of different policy practices and capacity amongst the member states on how to apply the EU policies. Due

to lack of analytical country by country data on policy outputs, the discussion will be limited to the broader set of the EU level policy outputs and not at the level of EU member states. Given this restriction, a clearer view will be provided in the comparative section of this chapter.

Figure 5.1.1.: Categorization of Implementation deficit



Source: Author Compiled data sets using official European Commission data from the Annual Reports on Monitoring the Application of EU law (DG Environment) (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/law/statistics.htm>) (Date of access: 15/03/2015)

More explicitly, the above graph shows how the European Commission ranks and evaluates the categorization of implementation deficit during the period 2008-2014. On the vertical axis (y), is portrayed the total number of infringements per category and on the horizontal axis (x) the timespan (on a yearly basis) from 2008 to 2014 including four main categories of implementation deficit as policy outputs: bad application, non-conformity, non-communication and not classification. Notably, bad application is referred to the weakness to meet certain standards in the application of a directive by a member state. Non-conformity issues arise when there are serious shortcomings in the transposition of a given directive to a member state. Non-communication emerges if a

member state fails to notify the transposition of a specific directive before a given deadline. Non-classification regards those cases that are not able to be categorized (European Commission, 31st Annual Report 2013). Comparatively, both the EU interviewees and the graph above confirm that bad application and lack of enforcement are some of the most common categories over time mainly linked to the institutional and administrative capacity of the state to impose and successfully implement legislation in its territory. This is also corroborated by the words of an EU interviewee (24), *“there are persistent problems with enforcement and implementation that have not been solved efficiently and continue to be a significant barrier”*.

Understandably, the degree of enforcement of a policy relies on how strong a state institutionally and constitutionally is. In a similar fashion, for others, such as the interviewees (20) and (26), the lack of enforcement is a key issue that stumbles upon the systematic challenges and domestic problems of the member states. An example of that is waste management in Greece (see also Chapter 6). The same respondents articulated that acknowledging that the majority of member states face various pressures domestically, such as those referred to above, it is not surprising that bad application still continues to be a chronic problem. Similarly, for the majority of the Greek interviewees, non-correct and untimely transposition may induce significant delays and omissions in the transposition of EU legislation into the domestic level. Non-compliance is emerging as another possible category, which is traditionally connected to bad transposition, increased opposition from the member states and the existence of different domestic standards (see Börzel, 2001; Knill and Lenschow, 2005; Thomson et al., 2007; Falkner and Treib, 2008). Many EU interviewees expressed that problems of conformity may be associated with a different domestic environmental framework, usually with lower standards, the increase of nationalism, Euroscepticism, and worsening economic conditions. Particularly from the Greek side, some respondents stressed the volatility of the political system and economy resulting in the rise of nationalism and Euroscepticism. Interestingly, the interviewee (20) argued that in view of increasing social and economic problems, such as unemployment, different prioritizing of needs by the national governments may cause a sort of lax attitude towards non-compliance. Although there is a slight decrease in the rates of non-compliance, based on the graph above, it remains

quite high overall. The greatest variation is encountered in the category of non-communication. As an EU interviewee (20) put forward, non-communication would mean non-responsiveness or lack of communication between the member state and the relevant EU institutions. In the end, non-classification seems to exercise little influence being statistically insignificant.

An interesting view that adds to the existing literature (Knill and Lenschow, 2005; Liefferink and Jordan 2005; Knill and Tosun, 2009) according to some EU interviewees, such as the interviewee (23), explaining the above analysis is the high level and scale of regulation from the European Commission that increases the pressure on member states to implement policies: *“I guess it was easier if you only had to implement two pieces of legislation, now you have to implement something in the order of 300 pieces of legislation. It's a big demand for the member states”*. While it is debatable how the different degree of expectation affects that, this statement essentially indicates that increased pressure may compromise implementation in a general context. Simultaneously, this may generate adjustment problems in the domestic institutional framework of the member states. On the same scale, the interviewee (12) ascribed that gap to the divergence between some of the higher aspirations and actual achievements.

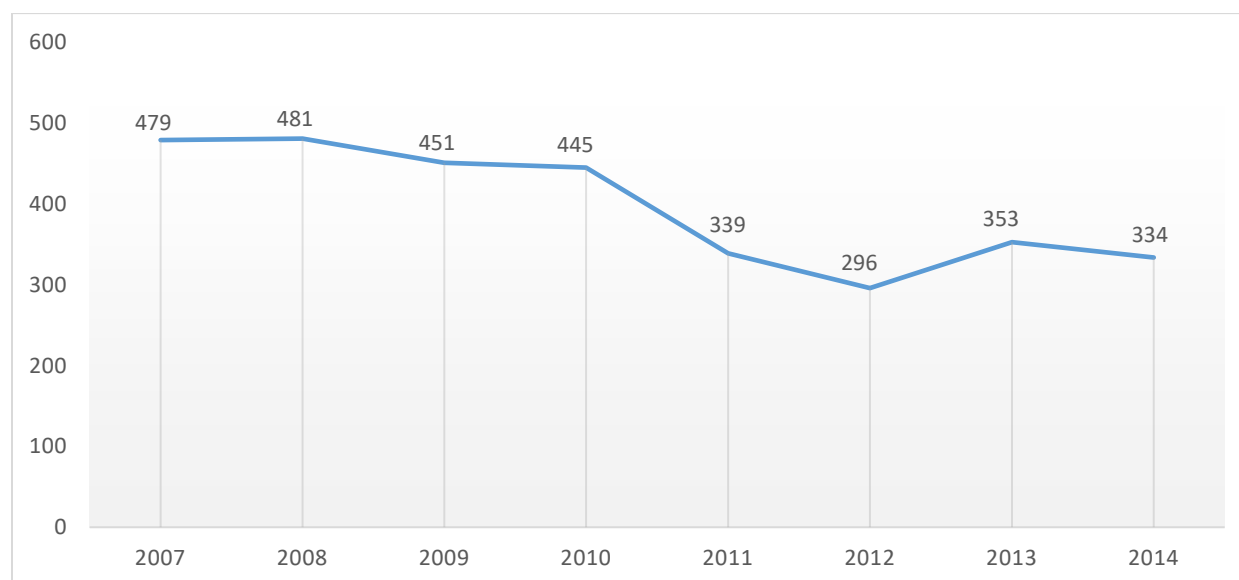
On the same wavelength, another British interviewee (12) shared the same view contending that there is a lot of concern about the under-implementation of the environmental acquis and the 7th Environmental Action Program: *“I think my guess is that over the next few years it's going to be increasingly challenging for public authorities to continue to implement environmental legislation at the level that was intended and apparently this is because of a steady reduction in the availability of public expenditure for enforcement activities”*. Interestingly, the lack of EU environmental inspectorates, as some EU respondents argued, exacerbates greatly the monitoring and control of the implementation process. According to the interviewee (20), *“there are no environmental inspectors in the EU. We have fisheries inspectors; we have public inspectors but we don't have environmental inspectors. So, we don't have the power to go on the ground”*. In other words, the capacity of the EU to inspect seems very weak whilst generating incentives for laxer implementation. More critically, the interviewee (13) articulated that

the dynamics of implementation have had a slower pace because of the wider economic changes at the European level and the large scale of de-industrialization in Europe since the 1990s. To illustrate that, he gave the example that those measures, in practice, aimed at the manufacturing industry which had knock-on effects on other policies such as the environmental protection.

5.2. Policy outcomes

Having deployed how the empirical research assesses the policy outputs above, I shall analyze here the policy outcomes at the EU level by deploying the views of the 26 elite interviewees with the examination of open DG environmental infringements from the European Commission. In doing so, I aim to better capture the main trends and explain the EU implementation performance.

Figure 5.2.1.: Open DG Environmental Infringements by member states by year, 2007-2014



Source: Author Compiled data sets using official European Commission data from the Annual Reports on Monitoring the Application of EU law (DG Environment) (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/law/statistics.htm>) (Date of access: 15/03/2015)

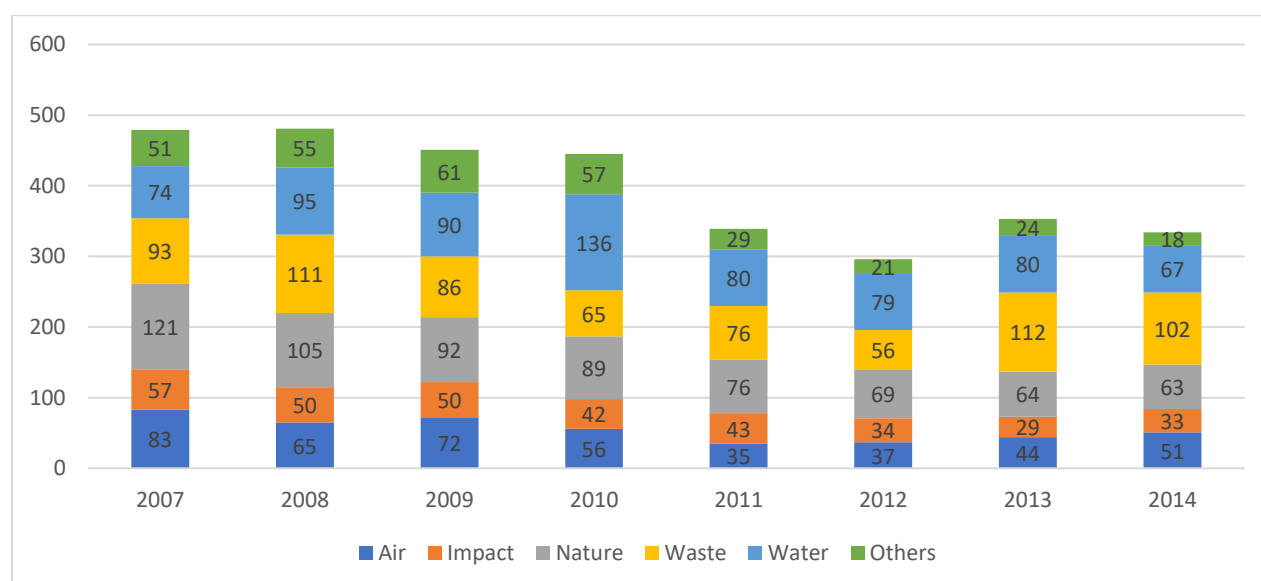
According to Figure 5.2.1., a remarkable reduction of the total number of open DG environmental infringements across the years 2007 and 2014 is presented, that is, the official prosecutions from the European Commission to the member states on the basis of different types of claims. Indicatively, the y-axis shows the total number of environmental infringements and the x-axis the annual distribution respectively. In terms of policy outcomes at the EU level and contrary to expectations, the number of open DG environmental infringements appears to have gone down during the economic crisis rather than up. For some EU interviewees such as the interviewee (26), a possible reason would be the external threat of fines by the ECJ which operates as a stick and carrot. Furthermore, the same respondent also contended that the need for fiscal consolidation in some member states may have played a key role (see Chapter 1 and 3).

In a broader context, the economic crisis does not seem from this graph to have negatively had significant impact. More explicitly, looking at the number of environmental infringements, the distinction between pre-and post-crisis data to a large extent marks two different phases. During the first period of 2007 to 2010, the number of the environmental infringements is higher, peaking in 2008, at the height of the economic crisis. The advent of the recession in 2009 is seen as the first step towards fewer environmental infringements which continued until 2010. In the second phase, from 2011 to 2014, there has been an overall improvement, as reflected with the lowest rate of environmental infringements in 2012. In this respect, the interviewee (21) epitomized the views of the majority of the respondents stating that *"we have come a long way in terms of effectiveness. It is significantly better than it was"*. Arguably, this statement is a strong signal also for some others such as the interviewee (22) who contended that the decrease of environmental infringements would be the object of increased efforts and coordinated action by the member states, and the on-going monitoring by the European Commission under the 7th Environmental Action Plan and Europe 2020 strategy (see also Wilson and Buller, 2001; Skjærseth and Wettestad, 2002). Acknowledging that many European states face fiscal problems reasonably this results in budget constraints and, subsequently, less money to spend in other activities. In the same context, another economic factor as expressed mainly by the majority of Greek respondents would be that less economic output may lead to less environmental damage. For example, the decrease

of industrial production, investments and spending power of citizens may trigger fewer environmental ‘spillovers’ or externalities.

From a different perspective, the interviewee (25) argued that the reduction of environmental infringements may be the outcome of a country's long-term planning and environmental ambitions. He also used the example that countries whose growth model was not efficient such as of Germany sought to make structural changes to stimulate their economy towards a more sustainable path (see also Knill and Lenschow, 1998; Liefferink and Andersen, 1998; Wurzel et al., 2003; Lipp, 2007). Finally, this tendency would be explained for the interviewee (20) under the weight of global environmental challenges such as Climate Change and the pressure added on member states to abide by the international conventions and agreements. Arguably, according to that respondent, the pressure for better environmental outcomes may render the member states to be more accountable for their environmental action (see Vogler and Stephan, 2007; Oberthür and Kelly, 2008; Kelemen, 2010; Kelemen and Vogel, 2010). To conclude, from the graph above it seems that the reduction of environmental infringements at the EU level relies on a set of different reasons whereas the economic crisis seems to have a less strong pivotal role. In the next graph (Figure 5.2.2.) I will break down the sectoral environmental infringements at the EU level that compose Figure 5.2.1. as seen earlier.

Figure 5.2.2.: Environmental Infringements by sector



Source: Author Compiled data sets using official European Commission data from the Annual Reports on Monitoring the Application of EU law (DG Environment) (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/law/statistics.htm>) (Date of access: 15/03/2015)

The above graph (5.2.2.) presents more analytically the total number of environmental infringements by sector (Air, Nature, Waste, Water, Impact and Others) at the EU level across the years 2007-2014 as derives from the Figure 5.2.1. The y-axis indicates the total number of open DG environmental infringements and the x-axis displays the annual basis. To better understand the policy outcomes at the EU level, I based my analysis on the compiled data sets from the European Commission/DG Environment, various reports from the EEA and the European Commission (see also the secondary data in the appendix) and data from the elite interviews with 26 participants (see the list of participants in Chapter 4). In doing so, I aim to explain the composition of each column as well as the variations of the environmental infringements both annually and throughout the economic crisis.

Initially, in the sector of 'Air', a set of factors such as industry, agriculture, waste, and households have long been considered to bear a significant share of responsibility for the deterioration of air quality (Annual Activity Report DG Environment, 2013). In a broader frame, assessments have shown that emissions have fallen in the last decades, thus contributing to improved air quality. However, in specific sectors the emissions of some pollutants (PM_{2.5}) have risen, causing possible damage to the economy, human health, and ecosystems (EEA, 2015). A thorough analysis by the European Environment Agency (EEA) has assessed the impact of air pollution, focusing on the costs of public health, work days and other vital sectors of the economy. Drawing on that, it may be argued that many problems originate from the weak implementation of the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED), the use of Best Available Techniques (BAT) on a range of industrial sectors, and the assessment of the implications and setting standards of the industrial emissions and emission limit values (ELVs) on air quality. Finally, better control and management is essential, particularly in soil contamination caused by industrial installations along with easier access to information for citizens about the Industrial Emissions Directive (IMPEL, 2015).

In the category of 'Impact'³⁰, the implementation of Environmental impact assessments at national level shows noticeable reduction which translates into more efficient management. Due to lack of data it cannot be given a detailed analysis. Although the implementation of Climate Adaptation is at an early stage, there has been good progress in the sectors of freshwater and flood-risk management, as well as in agriculture, because of the transfer of these sectoral policies to the national level. Moreover, in June 2014, 20 member states from 13 in 2008 have drawn up national implementation strategies over the above-mentioned sectors, and 17 of those have drawn up a national action plan. For most of the member states, there seems to be an increase in public environmental awareness for climate adaptation five years ago (EEA, 2015). Only four member states currently implement a monitoring and evaluation scheme and nine have proceeded in the development of plans on climate change impact, risks, and adaptation. While numerous evaluations on climate change are available for 21 European states, more data are required on costs and benefits, as well as more elaboration on implementation efficiency with regard to future challenges (EEA, 2015).

With regard to 'Nature' and biodiversity, mixed progress has been made in nature conservation and the functioning of ecosystems. A rather alarming picture is seen in species and habitats due to the loss of biodiversity and significant ecosystem degradation. Indicatively, only 23% of animal and plant species and 16% of habitats seem to be in a favorable condition. Particularly troubling is the situation of the population of many species. For example, there has been a very sharp reduction (50%) in grassland butterflies, common bird population (12%) and common farmland population (30%), without recovery (EEA, 2015). On the other side, more promising signs are shown in particular species (European bats and carnivores), where the recovery is faster for the land and species protection. The greatest progress is identified in the expansion of the Natura 2000 network of protected sites, reaching 18% of EU land and 4% of the EU marine waters. Estimations of the ecosystem service benefits of Natura 2000 are

³⁰ For the category of "Impact", this covers 28 files concerning one of two Directives, either the legislation on Environmental Impact Assessment or EIA (currently Directive 2011/92/EU) or the Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment or SEA (Directive 2001/42/EC). All but one of the 28 cases listed concerned the EIA legislation and in some cases also additional other Directives and only one case concerned the SEA Directive alone.

expected to be worth between €200-300 billion per year (Annual Activity Report DG Environment, 2013). In this light, the brunt falls on the efficient management and restoration of the areas.

In a similar fashion on 'Waste', a recent publication by the European Environment Agency for 32 European countries indicated that further improvements and actions on municipal waste are required regarding the implementation of objectives under the Waste Framework Directive (EEA, 2015). More explicitly, the recycling target seems to have been met only by five countries so far, and six countries will meet this objective only by keeping the same pace as seen between 2001 and 2010, and the rest have to step up their efforts to meet the objectives by 2020. Furthermore, a matter of particular concern is the growing propensity in relation to the gap arising from the production and treatment of hazardous waste, where 17% of hazardous waste is regarded unidentified. Additionally, an increase in the phenomena of waste crime necessitates stricter law imposition and better monitoring, especially when it comes to waste shipment (IMPEL, 2015). According to a report of the European Commission (Annual Activity Report DG Environment, 2013), there needs to be further improvement of recycling within the current context as well as better inspection and monitoring of the closure of landfill areas. In the same vein, better approaches are proposed to be adopted regarding particular problems such as the treatment of hazardous waste, end of life vehicles, waste electronic and electrical equipment, waste produced in hospitals, dismantling of ships, bio-waste, treatment and disposal of contaminated soils by oil industries and management of sludge generated in urban wastewater treatment plants.

In the category of 'Water', drawing on the latest assessment by the European Commission (2012), only 53 percent of the EU's surface waters will reach a good ecological status by 2015, as required by the Water Framework Directive whereby three key pressures are identified. First, is the natural alteration of water bodies as a result of extensive pressure, known as hydro-morphological pressures. Second, there is an excessive abstraction of water due to the disproportionate distribution of water to users in river basins, the imminent lack of water resource planning and management, and illegal subtraction. Third, is pollution from diffuse sources such as agriculture that has a large

impact (40%) on EU rivers and coastal waters. A significant proportion (25%) of groundwater bodies are characterized by poor ecological status, mainly due to nitrogen compounds from intensive agriculture practices largely seen in the central and north-western part of Europe (EEA, 2015). Simultaneously, concerted actions and long-term planning have resulted in an advanced sewage system and a more integrated wastewater treatment under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive. It is noticeable that Europe's water quality is much cleaner now compared to the past when the level of planning and organization was not so advanced. Also, bathing and drinking water is reaching a significantly good quality in the context of the Bathing and Drinking Water Directives (Annual Activity Report DG Environment, 2013). Taking into account the progress achieved over the last 25 years over the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, significant gaps and insufficiencies in the implementation of the directives have prevented it from reaching full compliance with existing environmental legislation (EEA, 2015). Finally, in the category of 'Others', due to lack of data, a detailed analysis cannot be provided.

From the documentary and empirical data analysis is demonstrated that in terms of policy outcomes at the EU level there has been mixed progress but significant improvements in almost all environmental sectors. More explicitly, it could be said that there is a correlation between the views expressed by the 26 participants and the various trends as shown in the graphs above. According to the majority of the respondents, such as the interviewee (26), there has clearly been a range of successes in many sectors as a result of harmonization, with the imposition of equal standards across all member states (see also Tallberg, 2002; Mastenbroek, 2005; Holzinger et al., 2008). However, some others such as the interviewee (20), have expressed reservations that there are a few areas where a number of member states face significant structural and systemic challenges, such as waste management which require more efforts in terms of long term work. Nevertheless, it could be argued that the different dynamics of each sector contributes significantly to the overall improvement of EU environmental policy over time.

5.3. Comparison of policy outputs and outcomes

Table 5.3.1.: Environmental Infringements per member state from 2006 to 2014 on the implementation of EU environmental legislation

Infringements	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Austria	16	12	11	13	9	6	10	16	12	105
Belgium	20	24	21	20	18	13	9	10	23	158
Bulgaria	0	6	7	17	17	17	14	17	15	110
Cyprus	7	9	9	7	11	11	7	14	0	75
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	10
The Czech Republic	4	11	18	26	17	21	5	7	9	118
Denmark	8	10	17	13	8	7	6	8	4	81
Estonia	7	12	19	10	11	3	6	9	2	79
Finland	8	9	12	6	13	6	8	14	6	82
France	29	32	34	26	19	15	14	19	19	207
Germany	16	13	9	8	12	7	9	12	13	99
Greece	30	26	27	24	33	25	22	25	36	248
Hungary	4	6	12	11	9	10	8	7	4	71
Ireland	38	34	35	34	25	17	11	8	7	209
Italy	61	60	45	35	46	40	25	25	18	355
Latvia	3	9	12	6	7	5	6	5	6	59
Lithuania	5	10	14	11	9	5	1	3	1	59
Luxembourg	17	20	16	8	10	8	3	5	2	89
Malta	13	26	12	12	10	6	6	5	5	95
The Netherlands	10	8	7	5	4	2	2	4	2	44
Poland	10	13	16	23	26	21	19	20	20	168
Portugal	28	26	21	23	26	24	17	13	10	188

Romania	0	3	7	12	17	8	10	13	30	100
Slovakia	3	8	15	19	13	8	10	17	14	107
Slovenia	5	7	8	6	10	7	11	18	12	84
Spain	40	42	37	40	33	27	32	29	30	310
Sweden	6	10	9	10	14	9	12	11	9	90
The United Kingdom	33	33	31	26	18	11	13	18	16	199

Source: Author Compiled data sets using official European Commission data from the Annual Reports on Monitoring the Application of EU law (DG Environment) (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/law/statistics.htm>) (Date of access: 15/03/2015)

The above table, based on the availability of data, compares the policy outputs (Figure 5.2.1.) and policy outcomes (Figure 5.2.2.) at the EU level as analyzed previously, with the policy outcomes as seen above, namely the number of environmental infringements, at the level of EU Member states from 2006 to 2014 (due to lack of data on policy outputs per member state). Looking at the high number of environmental infringements, on a country by country basis, from a policy outcome perspective or legal approach, the environmental policy is demonstrated to be clearly ineffective. From a closer look, the above table may somehow be misleading in terms of how we interpret the policy outcomes at the level of EU member states. Consequently, these data may allude to other reasons that are not very clearly visible from the above table. A simple observation would be that policy outputs and outcomes differ considerably thus failing to deliver the objective of a specific environmental policy or directive (see also Holzinger et al., 2011; Knill et al., 2012; Nilsson et al., 2012). More explicitly, according to many EU and Greek respondents the number of environmental infringements at the level of EU member states would be related to other facts such as geomorphological features and the amount of natural environment resources a country has to manage. Of particular interest is the view of many Greek interviewees who argued that environmental policy is more expensive and arguably more difficult for a country (Greece) with a large coastline to be fully compliant with the Bathing Water Directive than one with a smaller coastline (see also Tallberg, 2002; Mastenbroek, 2005).

From the UK side, additional factors such as the level of industrialization, urbanization, and density of population may play a significant role. The interviewee (14) expressed that due to high urbanization and population density, big cities like Paris and London are more likely to have more air pollution problems since they accommodate the main bulk of economic activities in their region. This would also mean that the implementation of this policy becomes even more difficult. Therefore, the main question arising when looking at these data is why some member states perform better if the above standpoint is true. Based on common sense the more urbanized EU member states would be expected to have higher air policy infringements. As the interviewee (19) contended, the level of industrialization and infrastructure development may exert significant pressure on nature and biodiversity issues mostly in Central and Northern European member states. However, a more concrete answer which confirms the existing literature is given by an EU (20) and two Greek (9) and (10) respondents claiming that although the European south has more natural capital, its management becomes very difficult due to the weak administrative practices and capacity of the state and the strong presence of strong economic interests (see Börzel, 2000; Knill and Lenchow, 2001; Baker, 2003; Holzinger et al., 2006; Jordan 2009; Hanf and Jansen, 2014).

In this regard, it is important not only to record the number of environmental infringements but also to explore the specific causes of these in the context of 'leaders' and 'laggards'. The research findings, based on the policy outcomes of 'leaders' (see Chapter 2) in the above table, such as Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Sweden, UK and the Netherlands, confirm, to a large extent, the existing literature (see Liefferink and Andersen 1998; Börzel, 2000; Jordan and Leschow, 2000; Jänicke, 2005; Wurzel, 2008; Liefferink et al., 2009; Knill et al., 2012). At the same time, it also shows their alignment with the EU's downward trend as described in Figure 5.2.1. In general, the policy outcomes of these states vary slightly, demonstrating either a stability or a small increase thus strengthening their reputation and leading position among the EU member states. While the impact of the economic crisis was not so strong for these countries, this may have helped to keep their environmental infringements at a low level.

Contrary to arguments made in existing literature about 'laggards' (La Spina and Sciortino, 1993; Börzel, 2000), the above table belies this claim (Table 1). Given that the economic crisis hit at the economic level more strongly the Southern European countries, it is rather impressive that the environmental infringements of some of them has improved rather than deteriorated. More explicitly, Ireland, Italy and Portugal demonstrate a significant reduction in their environmental infringements thus following the EU downward trend as seen in Figure 5.2.1. Although the pre-crisis condition characterizes these countries having significantly high environmental infringements and a bad implementation record, in the post-crisis period they look like more 'leaders' than 'laggards' in terms of their policy outcomes (see Liefferink et al., 2009; Knill et al., 2012). In a sense, the economic crisis may have acted as a lever to more effectively address some of their environmental problems. According to some EU respondents, a possible reason would be that economic output in these countries was badly weakened during the economic crisis thus meaning fewer environmental impacts. Another reason, according to them, would be that the environmental infringements imply more fines and for economies of such scale, economic costs are very important because the money for the payment of fines can be kept and support the domestic economy. Unlike the other 'laggards', first Greece (Pridham, 1994; Pridham et al., 1994; Koutalakis, 2011) and then Spain (see Fernandez, 1994; Pridham, 1994; Börzel 1998; Mazorra, 2001) show the highest variation and a significant increase in the number of their environmental infringements. Alongside, a great divergence is also witnessed compared to the EU downward trend during the economic crisis as seen earlier in Figure 5.2.1.

For those countries "in between", according to the existing literature (Börzel, 2000; Jordan and Lenschow, 2000; Jänicke, 2005; Wurzel, 2008; Liefferink et al., 2009; Knill et al., 2012), such as Belgium and France, the impact of the economic crisis seemed to be different. More clearly, France has seen a significant reduction in their environmental infringements at odds with Belgium, which presented a rather abrupt increase. In a broader context, both seem to line up with the dominant EU downward trend (see Figure 5.2.1. The policy outcomes of 'in-between' states appear to confirm the existing literature as they resemble more the 'leaders' than the 'laggards' (see Chapter 2). Adding to the existing literature, the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), unsurprisingly,

demonstrate a small number of environmental infringements which reflects the EU downward trend (see Figure 5.2.1.). According to the interviewee (20), this would be explained in the context of sharing the same environmental tradition with the Scandinavian countries which make them quite efficient when problems arise. *“From the moment, there is a problem they will try to resolve it, they don't ask for time, they don't necessarily wait for judgment, and they are willing to more or less accept the expertise of the Commission for what they think is suitable”*. Finally, the states from Central-Eastern Europe show a wide variation in their policy outcomes confirming the existing literature (see Carmin and Vandever, 2004; Skjærseth and Wettstad, 2007; Sedelmeier, 2008) but do not necessarily mirror the EU downward trend in Figure 5.2.1. More specifically, this is reflected in the increase (Romania), decrease (Hungary) and relative stability (Slovakia) of the environmental infringements. A possible explanation for this mixed trend according to two EU interviewees (23) and (25) would be the less strict domestic environmental standards following the accession to the EU in 2004, socio-economic problems such as unemployment and the need for growth (see also Hicks, 2004; Bauer et al., 2007; Burns et al., 2012).

Finally, the vast majority of the respondents recognized that either inadvertently or intentionally the economic crisis has had an effect on the environment. The main argument of those who contended that the economic crisis has had a serious impact lies in the wide scale of economic constraints which make the environment less attractive in the eyes of the politicians and the public. For the interviewee (25), the strong economic impact of economic crisis on the Southern European member states has increased the pressure on politicians to address issues like unemployment and the decrease in living standards. This has, consequently, increased concerns that the environment is slipping down the political agenda, he complemented. At the same time, some others expressed the view that the environmental policy is very squeezed between other higher political objectives such as growth. In a broader spectrum, apart from the implications at the economic level, the direct effects of the crisis as many argued are focused on some other factors such as the decrease of available resources to member states and the reduction of staff employed in agencies for policy implementation. Therefore, in view of these problems, it becomes more difficult to secure public enthusiasm not only for new

environmental initiatives but also for the implementation of the existing environmental measures at national level. As the interviewee (22) noted, *“I suspect if you've got a period of inequality which is increasing, then there is probably a lot of sense in saying that, at the same time, the environment would probably suffer or it won't be looked after as well as it could be because resources, capital, and funds are going to areas where people and capital are already there, so it's becoming more concentrated”*.

5.4. Drivers

Having explored the policy outputs and outcomes at the EU level and the policy outcomes at the level of Member states, in this section I will explore the main drivers that lead to implementation deficit. For the purpose of this research, the distinction between endogenous and exogenous drivers takes as a criterion the EU member state. In this regard, the main boundary is set at the domestic or member state level. The data used to analyze the main drivers in this section originate from the EU participants (7) (see the list of participants in Chapter 4). Hence, in the category of exogenous drivers are included the principle of environmental protection as a transboundary problem, the EU internal market (single market), and the various international treaties and conventions at the EU or international level. On the contrary, as endogenous drivers are classified the organizational and administrative capacity of the public administration, economic cost (including the subsection of the tradeoffs), economic status and environmental awareness at the national level (see also Burns and Carter, 2012).

5.4.1. Exogenous Drivers

To begin with, building upon the existing literature (Andersen and Liefferink, 1997; Börzel, 2003; Liefferink et al., 2009; Burns and Carter, 2012; Knill et al., 2012), the research findings from seven EU interviewees show that there are three main driving forces that act exogenously. These are environmental protection, internal market, and global environmental challenges.

5.4.1.1. Environmental Protection

Initially, five out of seven EU interviewees believed that a first and traditional driver is environmental protection as the pillar of environmental policy which has led to significant increase of environmental standards across Europe confirming the existing literature (Liefferink and Jordan, 2004; Hey, 2005; Jordan, 2012; Golub, 2013; Knill and Liefferink, 2013). Taking a closer look, many of the interviewees put forward that from the outset of EU environmental policy in the 1970s the focus was probably much more on the trans-boundary nature of environmental challenges whilst being more responsive to addressing specific environmental problems, such as acid rain (Lenschow, 2000; Jordan, 2012). As the interviewee (20) stated, *“my water is your water, my air is your air and this was immediately obvious from the 1970s onwards”*. From a theoretical and research point of view, the interviewee (23) reported that there is a strong scientific recognition of the severity and causes of environmental problems, which are not constrained to an individual country, either ‘leader’ or ‘laggard’, but very often emerge from the national level.

5.4.1.2. Single Market

According to four out of seven EU interviewees, the second driver is economic and lies in the principles of the internal market. In line with the existing literature (Lenschow, 2000; Jordan, 2002; Hey, 2005), the vast majority of the interviewees contended that internal market draws its legitimacy from the existence of fair rules in trade. Additionally, in the name of protecting the European competitiveness, corporate interests exercised significant pressure to have a level playing field and avoid competitive disadvantage. This has, in turn, led to the adoption of a common set of standards and better environmental protection. For the interviewee (26), this is linked to the strengthening of the internal market logic by the admission of countries like Sweden, Austria, and Finland, as clear front runners in the environmental policy. Despite the strong economic dimension, as another EU interviewee (20) stated there is also a strong environmental aspect, *“we compete on tax and innovation but not on pollution”*.

5.4.1.3. Global challenges and international agreements

Two out of seven EU interviewees contended that climate change is another international driver that has emerged in the recent years. In accordance with the existing literature, some of them expressed the view that apart from the legal aspects of the Kyoto Protocol, there is also a keen desire by the EU to become an international climate ‘leader’ having already driven and shaped the domestic environmental policy of the member states (see Manne and Richels, 2000; Böhringer and Vogt, 2004; Vogler, 2005; Rabe, 2007; Biesbroek et al., 2010). For the interviewee (23) global problems such as climate change are beyond national borders and necessitate supranational action, which can be seen in the International Treaties and Conventions (such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Rio and the Johannesburg Summits).

5.4.2. Endogenous Drivers

5.4.2.1. Organization and Administration

Adding to the existing literature, according to five out of seven EU interviewees, the level and quality of services of public administration have to do with the domestic political characteristics, such as the organizational structure of the state (Knill, 1998; Knill and Lenschow, 1998, 2000, 2005; Jordan, 1999; Tallberg, 2002; Börzel, 2003). Similarly, they argued that serious difficulties often arise from the limited capacity of the state apparatus to accept and promote the necessary reforms. In the same vein, they asserted that the lack of experience and understanding of those who are responsible for policy implementation in the state machinery is very likely to lead to poor implementation across the board. According to the interviewee (26) this is summarized as follows, *“when Europe is a dirty word then it’s difficult to support EU legislation, as a result the environment becomes an easy scapegoat for many governments, because if you don’t find the environmental protection important then your electorate thinks the same”*. This is more clearly explained by the interviewee (26), *“If you lack the basic economic means to keep your government running or you’re still building up your administration, it’s very difficult to engage with anything at the EU level”*. Building upon the existing literature regarding the

enlargement of the EU after 2000 with the new member states from the Central-Eastern periphery of Europe (see Andonova 2003; Jehlička and Tickle, 2004; Skjærseth and Wettestad, 2007) the majority of the interviewees argued that the different characteristics in terms of culture, history, and economic development, make the implementation of environmental policy more difficult due to limited administrative and regulatory capacity along with a different institutional framework and mindset.

5.4.2.2. *Economic cost*

All the EU interviewees agreed that a very strong domestic factor is economic cost. While in the existing literature (Börzel, 2003; Börzel and Risse, 2003; Falkner et al., 2008; Holzinger et al., 2008a) costs for some member states seem quite high, the research findings, in contrast, show that they are quite low. Indicatively, the cost for some of the respondents, such as the interviewee (20), is significantly low, for example, *“it is no more than 1% of GDP”*, and for the interviewee (26), *“it could be close to the bottom”*. However, costs for some others such as the interviewee (24) are dependent on the targets and the level of investment required. Most of them used the example of the Urban Waste Water Directive to emphasize how expensive can be for countries that lack infrastructure and need huge investments in sewage works.

At the other end of the spectrum, the large majority of the EU interviewees (six out of seven) recognized that the costs of environmental policies are generally low outweighed by environmental benefits. For the interviewee (20), costs are quite often exaggerated without reflecting the reality. However, this view contradicts the documents for the implementation of the new clean air quality package in 2013 estimating that the costs are about 10-12 times less than the expected benefits in terms of the environment, human health, and ecosystems by 2030 (see the report ‘The costs of not implementing the environmental acquis’, EC/DG Environment, 2011). Emphasizing the human dimension, the interviewee (22) expressed that a common problem is that due to the nature of environmental issues. More specifically, he stated that the actual costs of not having

environmental measures are not known by the people that pollute or damage the environment.

An interesting finding according to the vast majority of the respondents is that costs for environmental protection may be seen in the eyes of governments during the economic crisis as an unnecessary luxury. A common argument which summarizes how specific countries such as the UK, Poland, and the Czech Republic see environmental policy is that it may damage their growth. According to the interviewee (20), their main argument is summarized as, *'costs, in terms of investment that need to go to the environment, could have been invested elsewhere'*. In the same vein, particular attention is given to vested interests and business lobbying with regard to their influence on the structural nature of the economy. It is not surprising, according to the interviewee (25) that quite frequently voices from the business sector and some Eastern countries seek to retain the traditional model of perpetual economic growth. This is eloquently described in the words of the interviewee (23), *"when it comes to climate change, the fact that Poland is so heavily dependent upon coal does not mean that the Polish are being difficult on climate change just for the sake of it, but they have a structural dependence on coal for the moment and they want their time to break it"*. For the same respondent, a good example is that during the designation of protected sites (Natura 2000), some of the member states designated more Natura 2000 protection sites in order to get more funding. In both cases, on the one hand, the unwillingness to incur more costs is strongly recognized, but on the other hand, the incentive for their acceptance is more funding.

5.4.2.2.1. Tradeoffs

As a subsection of the analysis of costs, one of the issues that have been called into question after the recent economic crisis is whether economic growth and environmental protection can coexist. The economic crisis seems to have changed the plans of many national governments according to many EU interviewees to a more pro-growth agenda. However, when it comes to the discussion about the actual tradeoffs, all the EU respondents argued that in the long-term there can be no tradeoffs. Instead, in the short-

term they argued it may be possible but these should largely depend on the type of environmental issue. For some respondents such as the interviewee (24), tradeoffs are unavoidable due to the misconception that the environment is not fully integrated with other policies. Correspondingly, for the interviewee (25) tradeoffs sometimes may give the impression that they rely on an equilibrium model where the economy needs to preserve and grow. In the same context, according to the interviewee (25), they may become necessary for economic reasons. As he stated, *“countries from the Central Europe, having an old industrialization fabric, are welcoming the most advanced factories to produce cars with a very high level of recycling”*. However, this view may reveal half of the truth but for some others such as the interviewee (14) tradeoffs overshadow the dynamics of environmental issues. Alongside, the interviewee (21) argued that the growing economic pressures demand certain actions, *“There is much more pressure now to show how good environmental governance leads to long-term economic growth and sustainability”*.

5.4.2.3. Economic status

The assessment of costs arguably can be associated with the economic status of the countries. Although, theoretically, the economic condition of a country would be of great importance based on the existing literature (Börzel, 2000; Jordan and Lenschow, 2000; Knill and Lenschow, 2005), the empirical research shows that the diversity of views among the respondents may weaken this claim, indicating that it is significant but not a necessary condition. It is telling that less than half of the EU interviewees believed that economic status per se is very important and the rest asserted that other factors, such as the potential and the level of organization may have an equally high influence. Initially, it seems to be generally accepted that a country which is economically better off may have more resources and capacity to meet its environmental targets (see Börzel, 2000; Liefferink et al., 2009). In contrast, countries that are in a worse economic condition may tend to be more relaxed on environmental legislation with the excuse of being an obstacle to economic growth. Interestingly, some of them enunciated that economic condition may be linked to issues such as short-term electoral cycle and long-term planning. This is best

explained in the words of the interviewee (23), *“as a national politician, when you are facing austerity measures and a short term electoral cycle, of course, the economic situation of your country will affect the decisions you make”*.

5.4.2.4. Environmental Awareness

Another factor which has common ground with the existing literature according to four out of seven EU interviewees is the level of environmental awareness and support (Börzel, 2000; Jordan and Lenschow, 2000; Jänicke, 2005; Knill and Liefferink, 2007; Knill et al., 2012). According to the interviewee (22), a crucial parameter is that affluent states may have a higher degree of environmental awareness: *“The richer or more affluent areas tended to have people that were more aware of environmental standards and more interested in seeing those standards raised”*. Indicatively, according to the interviewee (25) environmental awareness varies across EU member states, *“I remember very well that when some member states like Greece, Spain, and Portugal were joining the EU, the level of awareness about the environmental agenda among the public opinion was not very high”*. Likewise, the interviewee (25) reported that many Central-Eastern member states after the fall of the Soviet Union and their accession to the EU still have low environmental awareness compared to those from the western part of Europe.

5.5. EU Implementation Performance

The assessment of policy outputs and outcomes previously provides a clearer picture of the overall performance of EU environmental policy (see Liefferink et al., 2009; Knill et al., 2012). Empirical evidence seems to confirm the existing literature (Vogler, 2005; Jordan, 2012; Golub, 2013) (see also Chapter 2) with regard to the significant improvement but there is mixed progress across many sectoral policies such as air, waste, and water (see also the EEA report on the state of environment, 2015). According to the vast majority of the respondents, implementation is linked to better compliance and enforcement of the EU law by the member states as policy outputs. More specifically, all

the EU interviewees (7) recognized that EU environmental policy in terms of policy outcomes is very effective having significantly increased and improved the environmental standards and protection across Europe since its establishment as well as in many sectors, such as air, nature conservation, water, waste and climate change. Many of the respondents have also agreed that the all-encompassing perception and scope of EU environmental policy shows that the environment is not just a sectoral policy as traditionally thought to be, but integrated into all EU policies. According to the interviewee (21), the EU environmental policy seems very effective: *“On an of scale 1-10, where 10 is completely effective and 1 is totally ineffective, I would predict it as something like at least 8”*. Although this statement is a strong indication that effectiveness is generally perceived very high, the remaining gap nevertheless triggers further thoughts and reflection about whether and how it can be improved. Some of the influential factors reported, building upon the existing literature, are the consistency of the EU rules and the stability of the regulatory framework (Lafferty and Hovden, 2003; Jordan and Lenschow, 2010; Jordan, 2012; Runhaar et al., 2014). Less so, but equally significant were the forward-looking environmental strategies, the adoption of ambitious environmental legislation and the regulatory expansion of the environmental acquis, the imposition of equal environmental standards for the purposes of the internal market, and the increase of environmental awareness after some environmental accidents in the past (e.g. Seveso). This progress is best described in the words of a Greek interviewee (1): *“Compared to other continents, countries, and regions in the world, EU environmental policy is far ahead. That is in terms of incorporating the environmental dimension into many aspects of society and people's lives, so I think it has a better environmental policy and management than other geographical areas of the world. This is also quite evident when speaking in terms of sustainability and overall quality of life and well-being of citizens”*. On the other hand, what appears to be a strong cause of concern among the EU respondents is the systemic challenges at the domestic level. Developments in the political and economic realm, such as the frequent elections, financial uncertainty, and economic problems, are thought to be critical factors. Indicatively, many of the respondents also enunciated the impact of Euro-skepticism and national sovereignty on further progress operating mostly as a stumbling block.

Conclusion

Contrary to expectations, EU environmental policy has seen improvement during the economic crisis and not a regression in its performance. Interestingly, the economic crisis has not played that hefty role as anticipated and affected to a varying degree the implementation of EU environmental policy in the member states. However, there are still many challenges to be addressed as analyzed in the sections of policy outputs and outcomes among the member states. Non-compliance and lack of enforcement as policy outputs are seen to be some of the main causes of implementation deficit along with the endogenous and exogenous drivers. Simultaneously, in terms of policy outcomes, the number of environmental infringements at the EU and member state level demonstrate that the delivery of the environmental policy requires more efforts. Despite the various problems and weaknesses in each sector, EU environmental policy appears to have great dynamics. This chapter has demonstrated that there is not 'one size fits all' model but there are different patterns to analyze the broader implementation dynamics and trends in the EU member states. The development of the two case studies, Greece and the UK, in the next chapter paves the way for a more in-depth analysis of policy outcomes at the level of member states.

Chapter 6 – Implementation performance of the UK and Greece: Two case studies

Introduction

Looking at the broader EU implementation patterns and how these were developed among the member states in Chapter 5, I will now focus on two case studies, the UK as a reputed 'leader' and Greece as a traditional 'laggard' that seem to have diametrically opposing implementation performance during the economic crisis using data only from the Greek and British interviews (elite interviews), documentary analysis and descriptive statistics. Empirical research demonstrates that the stronger economic position, the institutional and administrative capacity of the state and the better functioning of public administration make the UK perform better than Greece. In this regard, the aim of this chapter is to explore, analyze and explain the UK's and Greece's implementation performance in light of the recent economic crisis. First, I will give a brief description of the historical background and relationship of both states with the EU as a first step in understanding their domestic framework. Second, due to lack of data, I will examine the policy outputs based on the documentary analysis and elite interviews only and then I will discuss the policy outcomes tapping the elite interviews (Greek and British participants), documentary analysis and descriptive statistics (environmental infringements). Third, I will only point out the significance of the endogenous factors in explaining implementation deficit since the exogenous factors are identical with those analyzed in Chapter 5. Finally, I will analyze the performance of both states and then I will conclude by comparing and highlighting the main differences between the two countries.

6.1. A History of the British and Greek Environmental Policy

i. The UK

Initially, the roots of British environmental policy date back over a century with a range of environmental measures to tackle air and water pollution (Jordan, 2002). Britain was one of the first nations in the world that set up a national pollution agency and a very inclusive mechanism of land use planning (Vogel, 1986: 144; Hanley et al., 1998). Although the post-war era set the foundations for the formation of British environmental thinking until the mid-1970s, it was then largely characterized by uncertainty over development and conservation issues. The development of an advanced system of environmental regulation was designed to meet the needs of Britain as an island (Lowe and Ward, 1998; Dunleavy et al., 2006). The period from 1973 to the early 1990s coincides with the Europeanization of British environmental policy and a set of sweeping changes at the domestic level (Buller, 1998; Jordan, 2004). While the transformation of domestic environmental policy in the wake of EU membership has been pivotal, this was driven by high suspicion and opposition and was often considered as a direct threat to the domestic system (Hanley et al., 1998; Barnes and Barnes, 2000). Inconsistency between domestic and EU environmental standards and poor compliance gave Britain the reputation of 'The Dirty Man of Europe' (Rose, 1990; Jordan, 2002). The longstanding dispute arguably disclosed a deeper gap between Britain and the EU on issues like acid rain, radioactive contamination of the Irish Sea, and low standards of water and air quality. The beginning of the next phase in 1992 presented a significant de-escalation of the tension between the UK and the Commission with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty (Buller, 1998). Broadly, after the signing of this Treaty, the compatibility and convergence of domestic environmental policies with European policies showed that they were a step closer. Despite the widespread skepticism, Britain showed its commitment to the European path by inaugurating a reinvigorated environmental policy and a kind of political consensus with Europe (Dunleavy et al., 2006; Jordan and Lenschow, 2009). This change is reflected in the development of policies and policy structures where the UK has been influential for example, in the area of climate change and emission reductions (Wurzel, 2002; Tompkins et al., 2010).

ii. Greece

On the other hand, although it is often suggested that environmental policy in Greece is relatively new; some policies can be traced to the beginning of the last century (Pridham, 1994; Lekakis, 2000; Giannakourou, 2005, 2011). For example, the first measures for the regulation of industrial activity came to the forefront in the early 1920s, for cars in the early 1930s, and for pesticides in 1967. The genesis and evolution of Greek environmental policy are distinguished into two separate periods. The first period commenced in the early 1970s with the development of policies for environmental protection. During the first period, Greece ratified most of the international conventions and signed bilateral or multilateral agreements with neighboring countries on issues of transnational interest, especially in the management of natural resources. The establishment of the Environmental Pollution Control Project (EPCP) in the first half of the 1970s was the first organized effort by Greece to address environmental problems under the aegis of the Greek Ministry of Social Services, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Kousis, 1994; Lekakis, 2000). Legislative initiatives during the first period included precautionary measures for the protection of the environment and the health of citizens, as well as the increasing urbanization and industrialization (Pridham et al., 1995; Lekakis, 2000). At the same time, there was the development of legislation on residential issues but this was mostly confined to the level of spatial planning and to a set of measures such as antiquities, national parks, waste management, health and safety of the workers, quarrying and mining activities, and seashores. However, the piecemeal character of the governmental action and the lack of strong political interest before and shortly after 1970 was affected by significant weaknesses in political priorities and infrastructure (Pridham et al., 1995; Koutalakis, 2011).

The second period, after the fall of the dictatorship in 1974 and the EU membership in 1981, officially constitutes the birth and development of a more comprehensive national environmental policy, which continues until to date (Kousis, 1994; Featherstone and Kazamias, 2000). During the second period, the environment is recognized as an autonomous policy area with the development of environmental policy and political

structures to underpin it (Giannakourou, 2005, 2012; Koutalakis, 2011). According to the Constitution of 1975 and the revisions of 1986 and 2001, Article 24 clearly states that *"the protection of the natural and cultural environment constitutes a duty of the state. For its preservation, the state is bound to adopt special preventive or repressive measures."* Furthermore, with the entry of Greece into the European Community in 1981, the harmonization of Greek and European legislation began by a plethora of new legislative provisions over a broad range of environmental issues that were not previously included in the domestic environmental framework (Kazakos, 1999; Ioakimidis, 2000; Featherstone, 2005). A key milestone on the progress of domestic environmental policy was the enactment of law 1650 in 1986, which set out the basic legal principles and the context of the current environmental policy (WWF, 2014).

6.2. The UK – EU Relationship

Both the literature and empirical research show that the traditional relationship between Britain and the EU is characterized by high reluctance and skepticism (Lowe and Ward, 1998b; Fairbrass and Jordan, 2001, 2004; Bache and Olsson, 2001; Börzel, 2002; Jordan, 2002, 2004; Jordan et al., 2003; Bache, 2007; Bailey, 2007; Gray, 2016). The view of the interviewee (17) essentially summarizes the dominant perception of all the British respondents (9), regarding the relationship with the EU as still very antagonistic. *"It's the general political antagonism between the British government and Europe at the moment"*. Although the majority recognized that there is close collaboration with the EU, opposition, however, has increased giving the impression of a constant political conflict. A possible cause for most of them would be the issue of national sovereignty and the existence of competitive political and economic interests. Another troubling issue according to two interviewees (17) and (18), is the political debate over the referendum (Brexit) which raises many doubts over whether the British government will be able to renegotiate not only its political relationship with the EU but also the environmental legislation declared by former Prime Minister David Cameron:

"We've been very clear about what we want to see changed," he told Parliament. "There is a series of areas - social legislation, employment legislation, environmental legislation - where Europe has gone far too far" (ENDs Report, Jan-Feb 2013).

Apart from the political considerations, some respondents enunciated that Euroscepticism and increased resistance may undermine the concept of environmental policy with a possible retreat in environmental legislation for domestic political and partisan purposes. According to the interviewee (11):

"it has brought huge benefits to those of the United Kingdom and Europe as a whole. The impact on air quality, water quality, climate change and across a whole range of environmental areas has been hugely invaluable because most of the big environmental challenges the world faces do not respect national borders and for this reason, there is the need of supranational institutions to address them. The EU is probably the most effective supranational organization in the world by taking the environment seriously. In this sense, green issues are a clear example of Europe being necessary".

The transition of Britain from a policy taker to a policy shaper after a long period of laborious efforts to Europeanize domestic policies gave Britain the opportunity to be presented as 'leader' contributing decisively to policy making and EU policies³¹. In line with the existing literature (Jordan, 2004; Jordan and Liefferink, 2004; Jordan and

³¹ The UK exerted significant influence on many EU environment and climate change policies. For example, a number of pieces of EU legislation have been based, partly or in full on preceding UK policy and legislation: First, the EU's integrated pollution prevention and control regime (now integrated into the Industrial Emissions Directive 2010/75/EU) was heavily affected by the UK's system of integrated pollution control under the Environmental Protection Act 1990; Second, the UK emissions trading scheme was a pioneer of the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme (Directive 2003/87/EC), and developed valuable experience in the mechanics of running an emissions trading system; third, the concept of Exposure Reduction Commitment for PM2.5 was first set out in the UK Air Quality Strategy before its incorporation into the EU's revised Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC.4. Fourth, on climate change, from the establishment of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the subsequent agreement of the Kyoto Protocol, the UK Government has consistently supported ambitious and effective EU action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and argued for a strong leadership role for the EU in securing a global agreement. The UK played a significant and influential role in securing the adoption of the EU's own emissions reductions targets for 2020, and has also played a key role in ensuring the adoption of EU negotiating positions that have enabled the EU to play a leadership role within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process. (DEFRA Report on Environment and Climate Change. Review of Balance of Competences: Final Report, February 2014; Third Report of Session 2015-16 on the EU and UK Environmental Policy, House of Commons, Environmental Audit Committee, April 2016).

Lenschow, 2009; Gray, 2016) all of the British interviewees expressed that the EU as a driving force pulled the UK from the relative 'isolation' and made it a very important player in the international European scene. For the interviewee (12) this unfolds as, *"I think it is clear that the overall impact of environmental legislation has been significantly beneficial from the point of view of environmental interests and that is certainly the perspective of the UK"*. Undeniably, it was also expressed that due to the adaptation pressure (see Chapter 3 – 'goodness of fit') from the EU, the UK was compelled to adopt a higher level of environmental standards. According to the same respondent (12), *"environmental NGOs are convinced, and I think very rightly convinced that the level of environmental ambition adopted in legislation at the European level will not be replicated in decisions at national level"*. For the majority, admittedly, the EU first changed the existing policy paradigm by introducing detailed actions under a strict reform context, and second, it proceeded to a redefinition of the aims of British policy by exercising significant influence on domestic standards.

6.3. The Greece-EU Relationship

In a similar fashion, the relationship between the EU and Greece has very strong elements of interdependence with many benefits for the latter. Drawing on the literature about the Europeanization of Greece, it is evident that Europe has exerted a strong influence on shaping the structures of domestic policy (Ioakimidis, 1994, 2000; Kazakos, 1999, 2004; Featherstone, 2005; Hibou, 2005; Ladi, 2005a, 2007). As Ioakimidis (2000) very aptly stated:

"The Greek experience, therefore, indicates a downward flow of policy competencies, from the EU to the state. The state is forced in certain cases to assume functions and shape policies, choices and performance which would not have been considered in the absence of the EU's impact".

Building upon the existing literature (Pridham et al., 1995; Kazakos, 1999; Featherstone and Papadimitriou, 2008; Bache et al., 2001; Hibou, 2005; Lavdas, 2016), the EU membership has been a great incentive for the formulation of domestic policy because

the requirements of EU legislation and financial resources have played a crucial role in the embodiment of new policies into the domestic level. However, many scholars (Diamantouros, 1994; Lavdas, 1997; Dimitrakopoulos and Passas, 2004; Featherstone, 2005; Ladi, 2007; Giannakourou, 2011) perceived Europeanization as a way of modernizing the state or, more specifically, a 'westernization' of domestic policy and state functions. Moreover, some others, such as Pridham et al. (1995), contended that the Greek experience has been a good example of reinforcing democratic institutions and broadening democratic procedures in the political system. The adoption of EU institutional structures aims to consolidate the democratic and reformative character of the policy processes and political stability as part of a political and systemic spillover (Ioakimidis, 1994, 2000). Indisputably, a common assumption amongst scholars is that the EU has had a positive impact on the Greek legislative framework, institutions, regulations and policies. In the same vein, all the Greek respondents (11) recognized that the EU has been a determining factor in shaping Greek politics as confirmed by the existing literature (Ioakimidis, 1994, 2000; Kazakos, 1999, 2004; Featherstone, 2005; Hibou, 2005; Ladi, 2005, 2007), with the introduction of new policy structures and a culture of modernization. Some of them, such as the interviewees (1) and (9) argued that the connection with the EU has significantly transformed the environmental policy of Greece, resulting in the improvement of the legislative framework and sectors such as spatial planning.

Taking into consideration the centralization of the Greek state before their admission to the EU, the regional impact of EU membership has been remarkable in terms of territorial allocation of political power and funding (Ioakimidis, 1996; Kazakos, 1999, 2004; Featherstone, 2005). Thus, a valuable tool of the integration process for southern member states like Greece has been the EU structural and cohesion policy (see Featherstone, 1998; Paraskevopoulos and Leonardi, 2004; Bachtler and Gorzelak, 2007). The adoption of these programs significantly helped territorial decentralization and empowered the autonomy of the regions (Verney and Papageorgiou, 1993). Likewise, the application of the new structural policy (Delors package) between 1988 and 1993 in the form of Community Support Frameworks (CSFs) added a developmental perspective based on the regions' needs (see Chapter 3 – fiscal federalism). Consequently, the

domestic environmental policy has benefitted from the quality and range of the EU policies (Andreou, 2006).

Reflecting on the evolutionary context of the Greek domestic environmental policy and the political relationship with the EU is well-understood that although the UK and Greece had a different starting point in terms of developing their environmental policy, EU membership has been a common link by which a great boost was given to a revamped and modernized environmental policy under a new institutional environment. Therefore, the analysis of the impact of the economic crisis, policy outputs, and outcomes in both countries below will shed light on to what extent environmental policy has been affected.

6.4. Policy Outputs

In this section, due to lack of data from the descriptive statistics on policy outputs per member state, that is, UK and Greece, I will analyze the policy outputs using only data from the elite interviews (Greek and British participants) and documentary analysis. Adding to the existing literature (Börzel, 2000; Knill and Lenschow, 2000, Jordan, 1999, 2012), the comparative analysis between the UK and Greece highlights how the economic crisis has affected the policy outputs. To begin with, according to the majority of the British interviewees regarding the UK (six out of eight) the impact of the economic crisis has been unavoidably noticeable across the different tiers of government and the state functions without significant impact on the transposition, compliance, and enforcement process as some might have anticipated. For the majority of the British respondents the policy implementation has been quite good without major problems during the economic crisis. However, what the economic crisis prompted, based on two interviewees (13) and (17), was to very much slow down the level of ambition, in terms of implementing new measures and reducing willingness to invest in the existing ones. A possible cause for these two respondents would be the less government funding and staff redundancies in the sector of environmental protection: *“There is certainly less money available in the bodies of government to track and regulate environmental protection...the significant amount of income that came from grants direct from the government is now almost nothing”*. On a more critical tone, the interviewee (16) argued that despite the large

increase of financial resources on the environment in the previous years, this has currently been reduced notably but does not mean that the environment has been affected as much as people perhaps think: *“I’m not so convinced that the economic crisis has affected environmental initiatives. Things always change. It’s very convenient to blame the economic crisis for that change but I do wonder to what extent it would have changed it anyway”*.

For some others, the economic crisis sparked rather unintentionally a set of necessary reforms for better implementation. As the interviewee (12) contended, it has triggered a debate in the UK about whether the number of separate bodies which have a role in environmental protection and policy implementation at government level can still be afforded. The example on whether a merger of Natural England with the Environment Agency should occur captures the main reformist rationale. In such a context, the interviewee (11) argued that very often the government has to clarify its position. From a different perspective, some others such as the interviewee (14) asserted that political pressures and sectorial interests may have affected to some extent the decisions of the government to implement policies. In the same vein, the interviewee (15) contended that the austerity measures in the UK have had less impact on green issues because they mainly aimed at low-income groups which have not been major players in the green agenda. However, as he claimed, this may have affected enforcement but historically there have not been significant problems. The main change noticed, according to him, is before 2010 where the resources of the Environment Agency have been substantially cut and enforcement has become less strict than it was. Finally, the interviewee (19) argued that economic crisis and austerity are being used by the government as an excuse to avoid the implementation of environmental policies due to business pressures. However, he complemented that, in practice, policy implementation performs quite well in the UK.

Unlike the UK above, and adding to the existing literature (La Spina and Sciortino, 1993; Pridham, 1994; Börzel, 2000, 2002) the impact of the economic crisis in Greece has been seemingly very strong in the field of economy and environment. The victims of that are compliance, enforcement, and implementation. More specifically, the majority of the respondents (eight out of eleven) asserted that the impact of the economic crisis was very strong and the rest (three out of eleven) argued that it has affected the implementation of

environmental policy to a much lesser extent than expected. Indicatively, from an NGO perspective, the negative effects of the economic crisis have resulted in the suspension of the implementation of many environmental plans by lowering the ambitions for better environmental policies:

“I see that what has been achieved over the years is currently at risk and sadly it drives us several decades back, or maybe even worse. Unfortunately, instead of being a great chance to sort out some things, like creating growth and ultimately getting out of the economic crisis more quickly, the economic crisis in Greece is used as an excuse to promote specific policies which harm the environment in a completely absurd way”, the interviewee (10) argued.

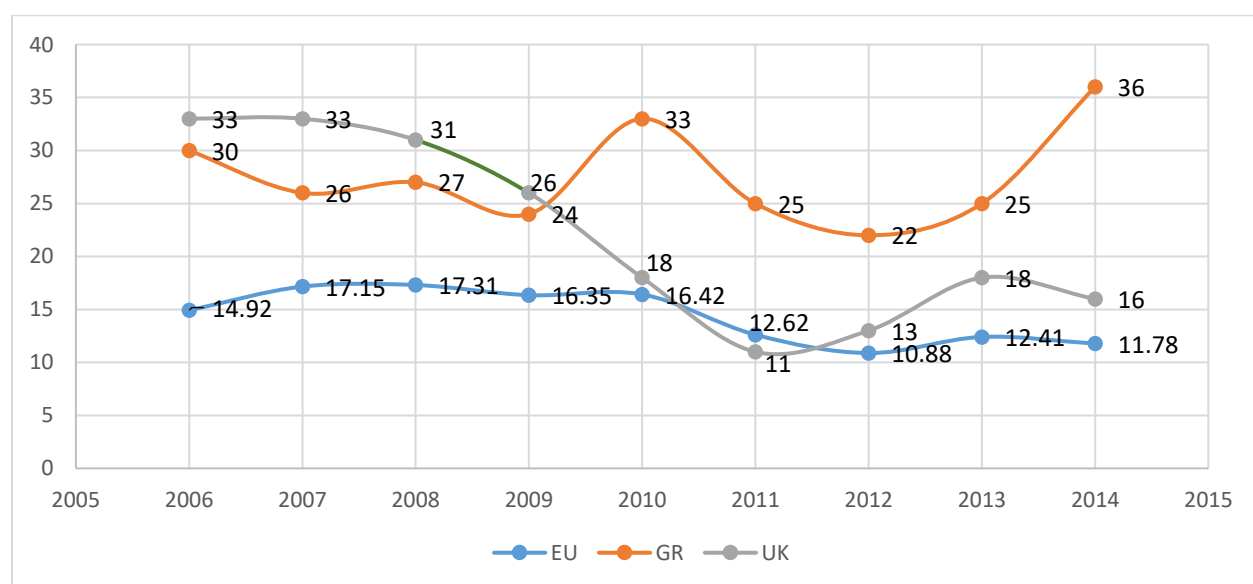
In line with the literature (La Spina and Sciortino, 1993; Pridham, 1994; Börzel, 2000) the influence of strong vested interests and incumbent perceptions dominating in Southern Europe, have resulted in non-compliance phenomena in Greece with the EU requirements reflecting also the lack of an overall strategic plan as argued by the interviewee (9). From a business point of view, the interviewee (8) contended that the economic crisis has further weakened the capacity of the state to enforce policies due to a large scale institutional inefficiency. He explained that by saying that it has undoubtedly slowed down the completion of existing environmental projects. Simultaneously, it led to increased corruption because of the narrow profit margins for large companies when implementing the environmental policies. In the same vein, the interviewee (3) has expressed that *“once there is no growth, the implementation of environmental policy is getting more difficult”*. On the other hand, the interviewee (7) argued that the economic crisis has affected the environmental policies, to a much smaller extent than expected, but this optimistic quote contradicts the majority of respondents as reported above:

“While other sectors, such as the economy, development, and employment, have been very strongly affected by the economic crisis of 2008 until today, the environmental sector is among those accepted as having lesser effects. At the same time, although the level of economic activity has decreased to a rather small extent around the environment, particularly in waste or forestry, the loss of key environmental activities was replaced by new environmental business activities,

such as waste management from excavation, construction, and demolition. Recently, amid the crisis, a small but flourishing economic sector in the form of environmental industry has started to be created, which at macroeconomic level compensates the losses occurred in more traditional environmental industries. More specifically, I don't have in mind any retreats done institutionally. Also, there has not been industrial disinvestment, such as funds transferred to and invested in productive units in other countries or closed down. There has not been such environmental disinvestment”.

6.5. Policy Outcomes

Figure 6.5.1.: Comparison of the total number of open DG environmental infringements from 2006 to 2014 between the UK, Greece and the EU-average.



Source: Author Compiled data sets using official European Commission data from the Annual Reports on Monitoring the Application of EU law (DG Environment) (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/law/statistics.htm>) (Date of access: 15/03/2015)

The above graph examines the total number of open DG environmental infringements (policy outcomes) on a yearly basis (2006-2014) for the UK and Greece and compares it

with the EU average (environmental infringements) per year including 27 member states except for Croatia. The y-axis shows the total number of environmental infringements and the x-axis the time period (per year). Looking at the UK's trend before the outbreak of the economic crisis, the total number of its environmental infringements is witnessed as significantly high. With the advent of the economic crisis in 2008 a considerably constant reduction is shown until the peak in 2011. From 2011 to 2013, there is a gradual increase and a slight drop in 2014. Alongside, the EU average seems relatively stable throughout the economic crisis with a slight fall from 2010 until 2014. Both Greece and the UK reached their lowest record between 2011 and 2012 at the peak of the economic crisis. According to the Annual Reports (28th – 32nd) of Monitoring the Application of EU Law (DG Environment/European Commission), one of the reasons for this decline, as reported clearly, was that more cases were being resolved by EU mechanisms, such as EU Pilot³² and SOLVIT³³, designed to improve communication between the European Commission and Member States on issues concerning the application of EU law or the compliance to national rules with EU law at an early stage before an infringement procedure is launched. At first glance, the policy outcomes of the UK compared to those of the EU average appear outstanding. More specifically, the UK's trend seems to contradict the view of those respondents who believe that the economic crisis has negatively affected the environment. From this graph, is clearly demonstrated that, instead of being an obstacle, the economic crisis operates as a stimulus. Some possible reasons for this progress, according to the majority of the respondents, would be the risk of imposing fines by the ECJ implying further costs on the public budget. Moreover, some others such as the interviewee (19) and (14) reported that the decline in economic activity and investments would mean fewer environmental externalities and thus a cleaner environment. For

³² According to the official website of the EU Commission, "EU Pilot" is a scheme designed to resolve compliance problems without having to resort to infringement proceedings. It works by the Commission and national governments using an online database and communication tool to share information on the details of particular cases. This then gives governments a chance to remedy any breaches voluntarily Date of access 19/05/2017: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/scoreboard/performance_by_governance_tool/eu_pilot/index_en.htm

³³ SOLVIT is a service provided by the national administration in each EU country seeking to find solutions within 10 weeks starting on the day the case is taken on by the SOLVIT centre in the country where the problem occurred, Date of access 19/05/2017: <http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/what-is-solvit/>

example, the same interviewee (19) mentioned that people drove less because of higher fuel prices resulting in better air quality.

On the other hand, the majority of the Greek respondents stated that the impact of the economic crisis was strong on the environment in Greece. Subsequently, the above graph corroborates, to a large extent, that view by the high number of environmental infringements of Greece. From a closer look, the comparison between Greece and the EU average shows two very interesting findings. First, the number of environmental infringements attributed to Greece far exceeds the EU average, with almost more than double rates in some cases. Second, while the trend of the EU average is relatively stable with a gradual decrease, the trend of Greece shows significant variation and a sharp increase in the most recent years. However, it is witnessed that even before the outbreak of the economic crisis in Europe (2008), Greece has already had a high number of environmental infringements. A good example, according to the majority of the Greek interviewees, that illustrates the poor policy outcomes of Greece during the economic crisis is the tax hikes on fuel that led to a deterioration of the air quality in many urban centers (mostly in Athens and Thessaloniki) and the appearance of smog (see Kathimerini, 2013).

6.6. Causes of Implementation Deficit – Endogenous Drivers

Apart from the analysis of the policy outputs and outcomes in the UK and Greece above, there are some underlying endogenous factors that have affected their implementation dynamics throughout the economic crisis as will be analyzed below. Of these, I will develop the organization and administrative capacity, the strong NGO intervention in the UK as a new research finding, the economic pressures, and costs (including the subsection of the tradeoffs) and the level of environmental awareness in both case studies. For the economy of analysis and convenience, I deliberately do not examine the exogenous factors here since they are identical with those analyzed in Chapter 5. Acknowledging that many European states are plagued by the syndrome of implementation deficit based on the existing literature (Lampinen and Uusikylä, 1998;

Jordan, 1999; Mastenbroek, 2005; Steunenbergh, 2006; Haverland and Romeijn, 2007; Treib, 2008; König and Luetgert, 2009; Toshkov, 2008, 2010, Knill et al., 2012), in this thesis, mostly Greece and less so the UK show many of these elements.

6.6.1. UK

6.6.1.1. Organization – Administrative capacity

Adding to the existing literature (Knill and Lenschow, 1998; Weale et al., 2000: 320; Jordan, 1998, 2002; Jordan et al., 2003; Wurzel, 2002) from an administrative and organizational point of view, the UK is believed to have strong administrative capacity. Initially, the majority of the British interviewees recognized that the quality and practices of implementation vary from country to country and sector to sector often seen as the 'Achilles heel' of EU environmental policy. However, what makes the UK's administrative mechanism stand out is the better record of compliance compared to other European states, a consistent and advanced system of administrative control based upon fixed standards and timetables, the 'neutral' stance and non-party affiliation of public administration, the transparent model of governance, the cooperation with the scientific community and the receptiveness of new regulatory, administrative and market approaches. Indicatively, half of the UK respondents contended that since the EU legislation has become more complex in terms of measures and directives, the highly skilled staff, the strong institutional and administrative capacity of the UK have responded well in designing a domestic functional system to deal with these issues. This view is best expressed according to the interviewee (13) with the key role of the advisory bodies. He stated that, as a 'northern' European country, the UK has established institutions such as the Environment Agency, which are instrumental in efficiently managing demanding measures with great specialization on various sectors regarding policy implementation. Finally, less than half of them asserted that devolution has contributed significantly to the efficiency of the system as cooperation with the local authorities is strengthened.

6.6.1.2. Strong NGO intervention

A new research finding that adds to the existing literature (Jordan, 1998, 2002; Jordan et al., 2003; Wurzel, 2002) according to some British respondents such as the interviewee (11) is the active involvement of the strong NGO community in the UK which exerts significant pressure (e.g. WWF, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Soil Association) and acts as watchdog for the monitoring of environmental policy and progress in the country. In this regard, as he eloquently stated, it is more likely for the NGOs to complain formally and appeal to the ECJ. In a similar fashion, this is corroborated by the words of the interviewee (17) that the large number of very influential pressure groups and NGOs provides a kind of implementation safeguard in the UK: *“We’ve got some very active groups in this country that are watching every step we take in the implementation of EU legislation and they will act if we don’t do it properly. I don’t know if a lot of the other countries have that.”* In this light, the importance of civil society and its active role through the NGOs in monitoring the implementation process is highlighted.

6.6.1.3. Economic pressures – Costs

For much of the literature³⁴ (Knill and Lenschow, 1998; Jordan, 1999; Fairbrass and Jordan 2001; Jordan and Liefferink, 2004) cost is very important in the implementation of the environmental policies as confirmed by all the British respondents. This is clearly reflected in the responses when they described how costs affect the overall stance and attitude of the UK. From an NGO perspective, the interviewee (19) claimed that the UK is very good at easy policies, as seen above, but when it comes to more demanding measures such air pollution³⁵ is lagging behind. This may be due to purported high costs for the government, which is not willing to take over (see also the policy paper 2010 to 2015 government policy: environmental quality from Defra, 2015). A typical example is

³⁴ See the policy paper of DEFRA on environmental quality from 2010 to 2015 (2015) and the Third Report of Session 2015-16 by the Environmental Audit Committee (House of Commons) on EU and UK Environmental Policy, 2016

³⁵ i) European Commission – Press Release Commission warns Germany, France, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom of continued air pollution breaches, Brussels, 15 February 2017. ii) European Commission takes action against UK for persistent air pollution problems, Brussels, 20 February 2014.

the alarming rate of air pollution³⁶ in the main urban centers such as London and Birmingham that may pose a major health hazard for citizens. Instead, more priority was given to issues that generate growth, for example, infrastructure development under the guise of employability (see the EU warning to the UK for failing to address repeated breaches of air pollution limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)³⁷. Similarly, at an economic level, the interviewee (17) believed that the allocation of costs is very important because there is the perception that it often falls on either government or certain industrial sectors and businesses, which, in turn, affects the stance of the policy makers: *“So when it comes to really difficult environmental decisions or changing the habits they have to make, I think the UK isn't doing very well. It is not taking the lead in particular but they are probably not that different from many of other leading EU countries in that respect”*. In the same vein, for the interviewee (14) the environmental policy in the UK has been largely characterized by a strong presence of corporate interests and pressures from economics which minimizes the development of long-term visions and actions programs for the environment. Hence, this condition according to him, may be largely favored by the dominant model of the British economy which comes into direct conflict with the values of environmentalism.

6.6.1.3.1. Tradeoffs

The general sense among all the British respondents is that tradeoffs (as a subsection of the economic costs above) are inevitable. For the vast majority (seven out of eight), tradeoffs mirror the discrepancies in perception between the environmental protection and economic development. This also implies the changes at the environmental and economic sector along with the synergies required. It has also been explicitly stated that in the wake of economic crisis most politicians see growth as the only solution thus undermining the value of the environment. A more insightful view on this issue is given

³⁶ See also the sixth Report (2014-2015) on Air quality of the House of Commons, 26 November 2016. Date of access: 30/05/2017, <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmenvaud/212/212.pdf>

³⁷ European Commission – Press Release Commission warns Germany, France, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom of continued air pollution breaches Brussels, 15 February 2017, IP/17/238.

by the interviewees (13) and (18) who enunciated that tradeoffs are dependent on the nature of the environmental issue but, most importantly, take personal and economic considerations which may have an increased degree of bias. Beyond the narrow terms of the understanding of tradeoffs, the interviewee (14) argued that they are necessary as they help to overcome their sterile depiction and see their actual utility as a synthesis of environmental protection and economic development rather than separate things for reasons of better efficiency. In a similar fashion, the interviewee (16) suggests that at the moment we need environmental development or enhancement which can include lots of synergies in environmental and economic development for a more dynamic process. With a rather high degree of assertiveness, some interviewees such as the interviewee (17) assumed that the priorities of the British government are unambiguous to more economic development than in the past. The same view is shared by other participants such as the interviewee (11) who affirmed that the economic crisis has increased the pressure at all layers of the society and politicians by setting divisive dilemmas and questions in the context of economic affairs. For the interviewee (15) tradeoffs are a significant part of modern politics but are not as many as generally alleged. *“For example, the landscape and habitats' protection requires some constraint on economic activity and the benefit of that is more spiritual than economic. But in terms of climate change, air pollution, water pollution and waste there is no tradeoff because costs are greater than the investment required to clean up.”* Finally, from an NGO perspective, the interviewee (19) asserted that environment has always been traded off to economic growth and especially under austerity this trend is perhaps stronger and well-embedded in decision making that affects policy implementation.

6.6.1.4. Environmental Awareness

Drawing on the existing literature (Knill and Lenschow, 1998; Jordan, 1999; Jordan and Lenschow, 2010) the majority of the British interviewees enunciated that the environment is not a major issue in the political scenery, but its importance among the British citizens is gradually increasing conversely. However, the level of environmental awareness, as they stated, varies comparatively to other EU states. For example, they voiced that it is

lower than the Scandinavian but higher than the Mediterranean states. They ranked it as somewhere in between. Indisputably, there are some voices, such as of the interviewee (15), who described the current condition as, *“The Norwegian public is very environmentally turned on but that is not true for the British public instead.”* For some others such as the interviewee (14), the low level of environmental awareness is due to the lack of high public pressure and engagement (environmental movements) around environmental issues (see the Report on Environment and Social Trends from the Office for National Statistics, 2011).

6.6.2. Greece

6.6.2.1. Organization – Administrative capacity

Adding to the existing literature (Spanou, 1996; Sotiropoulos, 1993; Featherstone and Papadimitriou, 2009; Featherstone, 2011) the vast majority of the Greek respondents argued that Greece lacks a strong organizational and administrative capacity. To begin with, the interviewee (9) stressed the issue of overregulation and the absence of a concrete framework with clear directions, which quite often creates confusion and vagueness due to misinterpretation: *“The law quite often misses the target through a plethora of laws, circulars, presidential and ministerial decrees, which refer to the same object or modify some paragraphs, resulting in an overlapping of competences between the various bodies, such as the Environment Ministry and the Regional Directorates of the Environment”*. Alongside this issue, the vast majority of the Greek respondents noted that the frequent changes in the domestic legislative and institutional framework generate confusion and affect policy acceptance. In particular, the interviewee (2) contended that *“usually the acceptance of a policy is the first important step for those being in charge of implementation because it requires some time to learn, understand and apply it. The key point is that it has to be better than the previous condition in order to be accepted by those who are responsible for the implementation: firstly, the officials and then the people”*. Furthermore, the interviewee (4) added that *“the institutional framework, especially in Greece, creates confusion because it undergoes constant changes by encompassing conflicting directions of environmental legislation on other matters. This largely disorients*

the main targets and overshadows the efforts made for the simplification of environmental procedures". Undeniably, these two viewpoints aim at the core of the problem, denoting that the implementation of the environmental policy is subject to an unstable institutional environment. In a wider sense, the majority of Greek respondents suggested that difficulties in the implementation of environmental policy stem from the formulation of policies by the central ministries, which disregard or fail to take into account the particular geographic features of the regions as insular or mountainous areas. For the interviewee (9), a very good example that boils down this questioning is the issue of municipal waste management: *"Greece has many small, remote villages in the mountains, which are inaccessible areas, and because of that it is very difficult to build infrastructure for the collection of waste and its ecological management"*.

On the other hand, the interviewee (1) had a slightly different opinion, noting that *"it has not to do with the waste policy itself, but the main blame is attributed to the significant delays of local communities to take decisions. in combination with the physical peculiarities of Greece under an extensive agricultural character, which might not have been sufficiently taken into account when deciding the appropriate method of municipal waste management"*. However, the above excerpt depicts very vividly some aspects of why the implementation of a sectoral policy in Greece has met so many problems. In particular, the respondents (1-4) expressed complaints about their marginalization by the central state, arguing that the role of the local and regional authorities is vital because of their proximity, easy access and knowledge of the greater area. Therefore, as the interviewee (1) put forward, in policy implementation the local authorities are asked to apply something in which their involvement is essentially absent. In order to overcome this stalemate, he mentioned that further devolution would be the appropriate solution. In the same context, but at the central government level, three interviewees (5, 6 and 7) admitted that very often there is poor coordination and collaboration between state agencies across all the tiers. Similarly, the importance of local opposition is underlined as in many cases regional or local authorities refused to join the implementation of policies in order to secure their regional interests. For some respondents, such as the interviewees (5) and (7) this is a great obstacle which in many cases has led to the suspension or cancellation of environmental projects. According to them, it is telling that

“central decisions that need to be adopted by the local authorities are rejected, followed by convictions and fines”. In some other cases, *“the beginning of a project under specific requirements impinges on environmental organizations, which appeal to the Council of State to defer it, thus entailing significant delays in the procedure until the rulings come out”*. By this description, it is understood as the problem of poor collaboration between the central and local governments. As the interviewee (10) critically stated, *“you can discern an inability of the central government to get things to move in the right direction and provide solutions”*. Another important issue formulated by all the respondents (1-4) is that Greece’s implementation problems are associated with the lack of an Environmental Agency with standards close to those of the Nordic states and the UK, in order to deliver better and more effective environmental services. More explicitly, the interviewee (3) clarified that through an example, *“we cannot implement the same measures in Greece as member states of the European North because they are more organized in terms of environmental services and this results in better environmental performance. For us, it’s like going to the kindergarten wanting to apply the same things as a member state that is in the high school.”* Some of the main points raised are related to different perceptions of the administrative model and the existence of basic and functional mechanisms to facilitate the implementation procedure. For some others, like the interviewee (1), their existence is the means to achieve a strong administrative capacity.

Additionally, for most of them, such as the interviewee (7), the misallocation of staff, fragmentation and overlapping of responsibilities in the administrative pyramid of the Greek state are a serious administrative barrier, which often creates problems in cooperation and coordination with other agencies and the private sector respectively. Also, a kind of disappointment, from the vast majority of interviewees, is observed that the understaffing of local agencies and overstaffing of central government agencies brings about an administrative disequilibrium in terms of competencies and workload. Indicatively, the interviewee (8) mentioned that wage differences between employees at local and central government agencies are a strong disincentive. Admittedly, the large majority of the respondents have expressed their deep concern that lack of control and enforcement mechanisms is the “Achilles heel” of the state apparatus due to

understaffing. They contended that proper allocation of human resources is required in the state machinery to establish strict control mechanisms for the correct implementation of legislation and imposition of fines. For the interviewees (3) and (4), misallocation and the lack of staff are strongly observed in their agency: *“Due to lack of staff, we are unable to get out continuously to check the progress of the ongoing environmental projects”*. A good example of such an administrative tool is the absence of national register, according to the interviewee (2), which unavoidably intensifies the issue of bureaucracy and opaqueness. In simple words, it involves many state and public agencies to consult on every step of environmental policy thus making the implementation process very slow.

6.6.2.2. Economic pressures – Costs

Drawing on the existing literature (Pridham, 1994; Börzel, 2000, 2002; Koutalakis, 2004) among all the Greek respondents (11), the issue of cost is ranked very high. For many of them, the implementation of environmental policy always bears a cost but it can vary significantly depending on the needs of individual sectors. In this light, as the interviewee (1) stated, *“it is not a narrow economic term, but it should be seen in a larger frame, including different types of costs, such as environmental, social and economic ones”*. A very good example is how Greece, as a very popular tourist destination, treats the water and waste management issue. For some respondents, such as the interviewees (1) and (7), the difficulty stems from the fact that environmental policies have different internal and external costs. Although Greece has traditionally had a bad environmental performance, as the interviewee (6) supported, the condition of the bathing waters and the quality of water is very good generally because is seen as a tourist product contributing to the national economy.

Comparably, in the case of waste management³⁸ the opposite is noticed. Greece is confronted with many convictions and fines by the ECJ on illegal landfilling and dumps but so far very little has been done to comply with EU legislation. On the one hand, this

³⁸ Waste management: European Commission refers GREECE to the Court of Justice of the EU over illegal landfill. Brussels, 10 December 2015, Date of access 30/05/2017, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6224_en.htm

may be a cost issue, which, in the eyes of the Greek government, the payment of fines may be more economically affordable than building infrastructure. On the other hand, there may also be some other factors, such as the fierce opposition from the local communities and the low level of environmental awareness. As explained by the interviewee (6), there is also a personal dimension, *“apart from the anthropogenic activities (dams), water is considered as a separate thing that the citizen feels on his body and is a health issue, unlike waste, which he throws down without visual and physical contact. Unavoidably, with direct contact issues, citizens are more sensitive. Thus, waste has less to do with him because he does not see the problem and is not directly involved. Therefore, water more easily has a personal dimension. The ones who live with the problem and reside near the landfills are more sensitive and at the same time seek a solution, in contrast to those who do not live close, simply because it does not affect their daily lives”*.

The interviewee (9) expressed the view that everything has a cost at the very beginning and, particularly in the Greek case, these costs have been covered by the EU through various funding programs, such as Cohesion Funds, but Greece is still not on a green track (see fiscal federalism in Chapter 3). On a more critical note, the interviewee (1) stated that environmental policy is expensive at the beginning but becomes cheaper during the implementation process. For example, if a country lacks infrastructure and wants to create it, this is unavoidably accompanied by short-term costs and long-term environmental and economic benefits by producing revenues that can amortize the initial investment. *“Environmental policy always has an extra cost. In my opinion, it should also include quantifications of the social benefits and costs of non-implementation. In this context, the magnitude of health problems, medical costs, and pharmaceutical outlays must be considered which bear a cost in strictly economic terms”*. In some other cases, the structural character of a country's economy may be a key factor for the quantification of these costs. According to the interviewee (6), *“it is expensive for Greece because of the existence of small-scale businesses and production units which are the backbone of Greek industry. However, amid the economic crisis, they cannot afford to proceed with the green investments due to the increased costs as part of the general uncertainty at the political and economic level”*.

6.6.2.2.1. Tradeoffs

For the vast majority of the Greek respondents (six out of eleven), tradeoffs (as a subsection of the economic costs above) are seen rather negatively but, given the economic circumstances, they may be necessary for the short term, claiming that the combination of environmental protection and economic development offers more sustainable solutions in the long term. Therefore, there is a strong sense that the economic crisis tends to lead to a complete disruption with negative effects on both sides. Given these circumstances, almost all the respondents argued that economic growth clearly prevails over the environmental protection. Not surprisingly, this may be underpinned by the lack of strong political will on the environmental issues. In this context, there is also a belief that strong private interests in liaison with politicians and the economic and business sector are very powerful confirming the existing literature (Börzel, 2000). For some of them, it is preserved a model that exclusively aims to ensure easy profit in favor of strong businesses. For the interviewee (8), a tradeoff would be possible under different economic conditions: *“There could be some tradeoff with the environment as a driver of growth, but there is no time for that”*. In the same vein, the interviewee (2) contended that economic growth should be part of the environmental protection for the creation of a flourishing market. This would tackle unemployment and provide strong incentives for environmentally friendly entrepreneurship. For some others, like the interviewee (1), economic profit has predominantly become the main driving force: *“Economic crisis does not lead this relationship with reconciliation, but results in net profit and net environmental damage”*.

From an NGO perspective, it seems to be very straightforward because environmental protection means the conservation of natural resources for sustainable growth, but in Greece, the opposite seems to be, according to the interviewee (9): *“I would say that there is absolutely no concern for the environment. Everything is done in the name of economic growth. In response to the economic crisis, the environmental legislation is deliberately downplayed and undermined, which does not help the economy to recover just because we are stuck in the past, basically trying to continue to do what we did”*. The same spirit is also expressed in the words of the interviewee (10): *“I think we have focused too much on the short-term and opportunistic than the long-term interest and that is*

something that we have repeatedly seen happening in Greece as it is reflected in the policies and legislation of the country. Currently, at a more practical level, the problem is that the existing environmental framework, seemingly, protects the environment and is made in such a way to secure certain interests by promoting a kind of development that is not related to the protection of natural resources, the country, and the future generations". On a similar scale, the interviewee (9) argued that the above legislative retreat is seen in many laws on forestry and seashore passed in the Greek Parliament. The political narrative and actions of governments throughout the economic crisis shows a blatant attitude in favour of the traditional model of economic growth, so that *"we [the national government] have so many beaches and forests, so it does not matter if we build upon them because we need growth".*

6.6.2.3. *Environmental awareness*

Building upon the existing literature (Pridham, 1994; Pridham et al., 1995; Börzel, 2000), environmental awareness is scored at a low level according to all the Greek interviewees. Other factors reported are the individualistic culture and the absence of collegiality. A common belief is that the level of environmental awareness of a society greatly influences the implementation of policies (see Börzel, 2000). In this regard, it is strongly believed that there is a lack of cooperative culture and mutual understanding in the Greek society. For the majority of the Greek respondents, the individualistic culture is a serious obstacle in the planning and implementation of environmental policy. Indicatively, some of the respondents mentioned that the individualistic culture originates from the family-based structure of the Greek society. More analytically, some respondents, like the interviewee (10), attributed this characteristic to the lack of environmental education and awareness that penetrates all the levels of education and society in Greece. Similarly, the interviewee (6) added that *"environmental protection is a matter of education, where family plays an important role. The new generation better understands the problem. The dominant perception that is summarized as 'not in my backyard' has led to this problem.* In a similar fashion, the interviewee (2) contended that *"the environment is a matter of consciousness but even though there is no such consciousness then at least there can be environmental*

education. And we have not mentioned anything about environmental education that is part of environmental policy. Often by ignorance, this leads to actions that pollute the environment. So, I think one of the main disadvantages is the inability to have strong environmental education, which results in the absence of collective consciousness". Finally, for the interviewee (3) is evident that during the economic crisis there has been a change in the environmental behavior of people, who overlook the environment in order to 'survive economically'.

6.7. Implementation Performance

6.7.1. UK

Initially, the overall implementation performance of the UK based on the existing literature (Knill and Lenschow, 1998; Lowe and Ward, 1998; Jordan, 1999, 2012) does not differ from the findings of the empirical research. In line with the majority of British respondents, there has been a significant improvement in implementation but a rather mixed picture in sectoral policies. More explicitly, the implementation performance is good on a range of policies, such as land and catchment management, fisheries and marine environment, climate change, emission reductions, nature conservation and waste, unlike in other sectors such as air quality, water framework directive, transport, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. Simultaneously, all of them admit that the implementation procedure has considerable scope and potential for further improvement (see EEA, 2015). According to the interviewee (17), *"I think we are very good at compliance. We do what we're asked to do. But looking beyond that, lots of things need to be done."* From the perspective of policy outputs, the UK is generally seen to be doing very well in terms of transposing the EU legislation into the domestic level and complying with the EU requirements. They justify that as a result of an advanced and integrated system of policies, strong scientific knowledge, increased accountability and strong capacity of public administration. This is also corroborated by the interviewee (14) with the adoption of market-based instruments such as the Emissions Trade Scheme characterized as a

great advantage to more efficiently address sectoral challenges such as Climate change (see Ellerman and Buchner, 2007; Ellerman, 2008).

6.7.2. Greece

The existing literature on the implementation performance of Greece (Kousis, 1994; Kazakos, 1999; Koutalakis, 2004; WWF, 2014) partly contradicts the optimism of the Greek respondents but concurs with the causes leading to implementation failure (Pridham et al., 1995; Börzel, 2000). A common assumption of the majority of Greek respondents is that Greece's implementation performance is better in terms of policy progress compared to the past but there is still leeway for further improvement. Surprisingly, the notion of improvement for most of them is linked to better policy outputs such as compliance, transposition, and adoption of European directives and laws into the domestic legislative framework, but not clearly to correct application of policies. All of them agreed that the interaction with the EU helped in the modernization of the domestic environmental framework in terms of quality and breadth of legislation, as well as the practices, strategies, structures and funding opportunities as confirmed by the literature above. As the interviewee (9) clearly pointed out, the economic crisis accounts for a significant regression of environmental legislation and any environmental progress made in previous years: *"Greece has never been great in terms of environmental performance but some things have been done in recent years. There is an attempt to restore the bad economic growth model we knew under the guise of the economic crisis"*. According to the responses of the Greek interviewees, the main problems lie in the increased bureaucracy, overregulation, fragmentation and overlapping of competencies, administrative and structural inefficiencies, misallocation or lack of staff and expertise, individualistic culture, lack of control mechanisms and political will, cliental practices, corruption, lack of environmental education, strong economic interests, and opposition from local and regional authorities (see La Spina and Sciortino, 1993; Pridham, 1996; Börzel, 2000). Reasonably, the implementation procedure is seen largely as a labyrinthine issue (see also chapter 2). For example, the interviewee (6) claimed that the project of restructuring the public administration, called 'Kallikratis' and put into effect in

2012, has perhaps affected the allocation with the expulsion of experienced and skilled executive staff. Additionally, some others such as the interviewees (5) and (8) argued that Euroscepticism, populism, high polarization between the political parties and frequent elections may have weakened the capacity of governments to policy implementation (see Dianeosis, 2016). For less than half, the adoption of various financial rescue plans (memoranda) may have triggered a surge of national division affecting the implementation of the policies due to political instability. In this sense, the main explanation provided is that the Greek governments were very hesitant in taking new measures due to fiscal deficits and public debt (see the Report of Bank of Greece, 2013).

Conclusion

To sum up, the analysis of the impact of the economic crisis on the implementation performance of the UK and Greece based on the empirical findings above demonstrates that Greece has seemingly been hit more severely at the economic level compared to the UK. First, empirical research confirms the improvement and better policy implementation of the UK whereas policy implementation in Greece remains poor. It may be argued that the origins of the bad performance of Greece do not lie exclusively in the advent of the economic crisis but to a large extent preexisted. A broader overview of the comparative approach above shows that the main difference between the UK and Greece draws on the organizational and administrative capacity of the public administration to effectively implement the environmental policy. Some other reasons are the economic costs and low environmental awareness.

On the other hand, both countries appear to have some similarities in how they see environmental policy from an economic perspective. A common perception is that environmental policy bears a cost which cannot be taken on by the national governments with the excuse of imposing an unnecessary financial burden on state budgets and businesses. Furthermore, the lack of political will and environmental interest from the political parties makes the environment a minor issue. It is not surprising that the main government efforts and priorities are focused on growth rather than environmental

protection. This is corroborated by the view that environmental regulation is seen as a brake on growth in times of crisis. Therefore, the pro-growth agenda is heavily prioritized against the environment. Arguably, the economic situation of a country is not so influential as expected by looking at the cases of Greece and the UK which share similar ideas about growth. Consequently, in terms of policy outputs and outcomes, the characterization of Greece as a traditional 'laggard' and the UK as a purported 'leader' based on the analysis in this chapter is realistic. Finally, in the next chapter, I will analyze the theoretically informed discussion of my research findings with the use of the federal theory.

Chapter 7 – Discussion of Empirical Findings

Introduction

The deployment of the literature in Chapters 2 and 3 set the foundations of this research to understand the nature and utility of the ‘leader-laggard’ dynamic underpinned by the federal perspectives (cooperative, regulatory and fiscal) for a more contemporary theorization. Thereafter, the analysis of the empirical research in Chapters 5 and 6 focused on the EU implementation patterns and the two case studies (UK – Greece) respectively. Having examined these parts separately, I will attempt here to test the applicability of the federal theory as outlined in Table 3.10 (see Chapter 3) with the provision of a theoretically informed discussion of the empirical findings. Therefore, I will start off the discussion of each federal perspective by giving a brief description of the general context and then I shall proceed to the main analysis of the findings. Finally, I shall develop the critiques of the federal perspectives.

7.1 Cooperative Federalism

Linking back to the theory chapter (Chapter 3), in a nutshell, cooperative federalism draws its origin from the US during the 1930s with the New Deal and lasted until the 1970s. Its main scope was to explain the relationship between a central authority (national government) in this case, the EU, and its constituent parts (states, counties, provinces) member states respectively (Weiser, 2003). More explicitly, it analyzed how power is distributed in the pyramid of governance within which the national or federal government (EU) undertakes a strong role and authority, while the constituent parts (Member states) are obliged to implement policies dictated by the central unit (national or federal government) (Zimmerman, 2001).

First, looking at the existing literature and the table in Chapter 3, the main argument of cooperative federalism would be that cooperation due to the existence of spillovers, namely, cross-boundary environmental issues becomes necessary. More specifically, the theory focuses on the transnational nature of the environmental problems which precipitates concerted actions at the political level between the EU and member states. Empirical research has demonstrated that the high number of environmental infringements (such as Climate Change, air pollution, waste management, nature and biodiversity in Figure 5.2.2.) has driven the EU and the member states to collaborate together in order to improve the correct application of policies and more efficiently tackle these environmental problems during the economic crisis. Second, according to the theory a significant driver would be the divergence in regulatory standards in member states due to a more or less advanced domestic environmental framework and economic condition. Empirical research confirms that there is divergence of environmental standards only in the Central-Eastern member states due to mainly political and economic issues following the fall of the Soviet Union. However, the issue of divergence is not related to the economic crisis but dates back to their accession to the EU in 2004. Therefore, it is not a new phenomenon but preexisted. With regard to Greece and the UK, no divergence of environmental standards is observed. Third, based on the theory, the relationship between the EU and member states would be collaborative in order to tackle systematically the implementation problems and environmental challenges. Empirical research affirms that the relationship of the EU with the member states during the economic crisis is based on high collaboration irrespective of the sporadic problems and tensions. A prime example is that the UK despite the high levels of Euroscepticism and traditional antagonism (at least before the referendum on Brexit) and Greece, to a lesser extent, collaborate very closely with the EU to address the environmental and implementation challenges (see Chapter 6). The Europeanization of their national policies shows the two-way interaction and the level of dependence, between the two case studies with the EU and vice versa. Additionally, this is also explained by the successful change of domestic structures which affects the capacity and policy outputs of the states to 'download' the implement the EU policies.

Fourth, drawing on the theory, the allocation of competences would rest on the principle of subsidiarity under the founding treaties. In doing so, the EU would internalize the externalities and member states would be charged with policy implementation. Consequently, tasks would be distributed more evenly taking into account how the implementation of EU environmental policy can be executed more efficiently by conceding this right to the member states as they better understand and deal with the needs of their jurisdictions. Against this backdrop, empirical research strengthens the value of the principle of subsidiarity as it shows that EU member states during the economic crisis implement the environmental policy differently in terms of practices and availability of means in order to achieve specific policy outcomes. However, the number of environmental infringements may reflect that some policies are implemented unsuccessfully thus requiring the aid of the EU. A good example that summarizes the above view is the ineffective implementation of the Water Framework Directive. As analyzed in Chapter 5 and 6, this directive presents several problems in its implementation across many member states such as the UK due to light-touch approach and lack of comprehension of the specificities of each country by the policy makers at the EU level. In this regard, policies can be executed more efficiently at national, regional and local level due to better understanding, knowledge, and experience of the territorial particularities.

Fifth, in terms of the 'leader-laggard' relationship, the theory would explain that due to the existence of different environmental standards, countries with lower standards may have a competitive advantage against those with higher thus resulting in possible distortions in the single market. Theoretically, the inter-jurisdictional competition would threaten the operation of the single market. In contrast, the empirical research reveals that there is no large-scale divergence of the environmental standards during the economic crisis between Greece and the UK with the exception only of the Central-Eastern European states which were prior to it as said earlier (see Chapter 5). However, this divergence has not been proven threatening to the operation of the single market. Based on the empirical research, it cannot be concluded that 'laggards' pursue deliberately to gain a competitive advantage, such as Greece, during the economic crisis. At the other end of the scale, a 'leader' according to the theory would not be very willing to lower its standards due to

domestic pressures, advanced regulation, technology, and innovation. As a result, they would prefer a level playing field at the EU level within which their domestic interests will be secured. The empirical research indicates that for a number of states in the European North and the UK this is true followed by fewer adaptation costs in policy implementation (see also Chapter 2). More specifically, the UK as 'leader' has contributed to the directives of REACH and Climate Change meaning policy innovation and economic benefits for the British industry (see Chapter 6). Therefore, a level playing field would be in the interests of the UK as 'leader' because the 'downloading' of policies implies that they implement their own standards and policies without having high adaptation costs (see Chapter 2). A very interesting but contradictory finding here is that the UK as a purported 'leader' would be really content to lower the environmental standards in the name of growth drawing up with some other 'laggards' from the Central-Eastern Europe and Greece who see the economic crisis as a great opportunity to boost development. In this regard, the theory has some gaps with regard the stance of the UK as a 'leader'. While considered to belong to the group of 'leaders' due to its good record of compliance and effective implementation there is a strong evidence that weakening environmental standards will bring about more economic benefits to the UK economy. The theory is, arguably, correct in analyzing that the 'leader' states would not be willing to lower their standards due to economic pressures, a regulatory framework, and technological supremacy.

Sixth, linked to the previous point, concerning environmental politics, the theory suggests that seeking to set up a level playing field at the EU level and then to forward the standards of the 'leaders' would trigger a demand for cooperation with the supranational EU bodies. Hence, the EU would live up to these demands but mostly would be concerned to rectify the inefficiencies of the national governments by introducing a stricter set of environmental policies. From the data collected, I found that a level playing field is necessary for the maintenance of the single market, equal access, common rules and collaboration between the member states and supranational organizations. This is best understood in the case of the UK and its collaboration with the EU institutions to shape EU policies (e.g. REACH and Climate Change Act), as they can more easily implement their own standards by harnessing the willingness of the EU to keep the environmental standards high. In cases of serious incidents of distortions of the single market such as

environmental degradation, I found that the EU Commission urges for immediate action its member states to solve the disputes before the recourse to the ECJ (see Chapter 5). Both the theory and empirical findings confirm that for reasons of competitiveness the adoption of stricter environmental standards is a prerequisite that favours mainly the 'leaders' in the implementation process due to fewer adaptation costs.

7.2 Regulatory Federalism

As analytically examined in Chapter 3, regulatory federalism was the outcome of a big surge in national governmental activism in the US during the 1960s and 1970s offering a fertile ground for legislative efforts to tackle large-scale social, economic and environmental problems (Oates, 2003). It mainly acted as a counterbalance to the increasing trend of taxes, deficits and federal bureaucracy in the mid-1970s, by providing grants-in-aid programs to secure federal involvement in most areas of state and local governmental functions (Rodden, 2002). In this effort, the scope of regulatory federalism is to determine and arrange the distribution of power within an institutional context (EU). Moreover, it examines the task allocation such as the EU to set standards and member states to implement policies (Kelemen, 2000, 2004).

Initially, according to the existing literature, the main argument of regulatory federalism is based on the idea that the alarming rise of social, financial and environmental problems stemming from the divergence of regulatory standards in the member states would affect the formulation of regulatory policies at the EU level. From the empirical research, in a broader context, I found that after the 1970-1980s in view of different domestic standards and many socio-political and environmental problems (Seveso accident and acid rain) EU environmental legislation has become more expansionary, comprehensive and ambitious in terms of the quality thus setting up an advanced legislative and regulatory framework. For example, the increase of "acquis communautaire" was accompanied by specific sets of legislative provisions and stricter regulations on environmental protection as a response to the environmental challenges of the time at the international level. During the economic crisis, a divergence of environmental standards is witnessed only in the

Central-Eastern member states but this dates back to the fall of the Soviet Union and their EU membership in 2004.

Second, based on the theoretical assumption that the presence of different standards would be the operative event of more complex problems, empirical research confirms the theory, in the sense, that EU legislation aims to obliterate any distortions in the single market as seen in the case of the Central-Eastern member states by harmonizing the environmental standards across the member states. However, this divergence is associated with the endogenous drivers such as a less strict environmentally domestic framework, low awareness, economic issues, future ambitions and planning (see Chapter 5). Accordingly, the scope of EU norms and regulations is to increase environmental quality and strengthen correct implementation. Acknowledging that each member state has distinct cultural, political and economic features, correct implementation becomes very challenging because it impinges on different political priorities, economic choices and domestic interests which in light of the economic crisis may vary significantly (see Chapter 5). This is more evident when looking at the integration process of the Eastern European states and their negative stance towards the climate pact on the use of fossil fuels (the coal industry) which is vital for their economic growth and the flourishing of domestic industry (see Chapter 1). However, going back in time both the literature and many respondents contended that the Southern European states were in similar position when they joined the EU with a significantly less strict domestic environmental framework, standards, and environmental awareness.

Third, based on the theory we would expect to see the relationship between the EU and member states to be very competitive with the European Court of Justice (ECJ) acting as a mediator for the dispute settlement in policy implementation. The research findings strengthen this view by presenting that the relation between the EU and Member states, such as the UK and Greece is very collaborative despite the rise of Euroscepticism, nationalism and traditional antagonism culminating with the recent referendum (Brexit) (see Chapter 6). Similarly, domestic drivers determine largely the implementation of policies due to their great influence on the national government as seen in the two case studies (see Chapter 6). However, the involvement of the ECJ is very important for those

who are systematically non-compliant, such as the UK with air pollution, and Greece with waste management. It may be argued that the main reason for non-compliance and bad application lies in the issue of costs which during the crisis are considered as unnecessary burden for both countries.

Fourth, in accordance with the theory, the divergence of standards requires clear competencies followed by concrete actions by the EU and the member states thus leading to 'politics of competence' and 'politics of discretion'. Building upon that, the empirical research indicates that in terms of the 'politics of competence', at the supranational level, due to a lack of an EU formal federal government, the EU Institutions, European Parliament, and Commission undertake the task of policymaking in cooperation with the national governments, and member states take over the policy implementation. In this context, policymaking is subject to increased lobbying and interplay between states with institutions, business sectors, environmental groups and state agencies that affect policy implementation. In terms of 'politics of discretion', as seen above, the research findings demonstrate that when it comes to distributing the power across the legislative and executive bodies, the role of the ECJ is very crucial in cases of dispute settlement (see the cases of Air pollution in the UK and waste management in Greece). It may be argued that the involvement of the ECJ signifies a precautionary means to avoid or reduce any discretion of the states in the implementation of policies in the absence of an EU federal government. At the same time, this means that objectivity and transparency are guaranteed primarily by the ECJ and less by the national courts due to domestic political and economic pressures. Finally, empirical research shows that the ECJ rulings tend to have a massive impact on member states actions operating as a stick to get governments to be compliant and improve policy implementation due to fines which in light of the recent economic crisis are essential for the national economy. Therefore, the risk of infractions and imposition of fines is often a serious threat with economic implications on member states to meet their targets. To a large extent, the ECJ constitutes the guardian of the treaties and, as such, ensures that all member states enjoy equal and fair treatment thus furthering the interests of the EU and the correct policy implementation.

Fifth, regarding the relationship of the 'leaders' and 'laggards', the theory suggests that member states would seek to preserve the integrity of the single market by incurring the cost of implementation. In this regard, due to higher economic, political and technological capacity, we would expect to see 'leaders' be more compliant with the new policies. Unlike 'laggards' would be expected to resist more in adopting new measures because of the domestic pressures from economic interests, weak policy structures, and high adaptation costs. From the empirical research, I found that there is a high correlation between the theory and research findings as to the fact that both 'leaders' and 'laggards' in the name of the single market, have to implement EU policies. In effect, it has been demonstrated that the Northern European states including the UK as 'leaders' despite the economic crisis can afford and take up the cost of adopting new policies as it is actually easier because they implement their own standards (e.g. REACH, and the Climate Change Act) due to an advanced environmental and regulatory framework, domestic structures, technological supremacy and economic condition (see Chapter 6).

In contrast, from the empirical research is observed that the Central-Eastern European states as 'laggards' appear to be more resistant and cost-sensitive to implementation looking for more funding through side-payments in order to keep up with the broader regulatory and implementation trends. In the same context, Greece as 'laggard' seems to be very susceptible to costs as the theory argues and despite the funding from the EU through Cohesion Funds still continues to have significant problems (e.g. waste management) in policy implementation due to lack of administrative capacity and economic problems (see Chapter 6). However, there is no strong evidence for Greece to seek purposefully to receive more funding apart from those projected (Cohesion and Structural Funds). However, a good example is given by the interviewee (23) that in the past some EU countries had sometimes accepted higher environmental legislation with the condition of receiving more funding in the form of compensation but this cannot be confirmed by this research during the economic crisis (see chapter 5). More specifically, the designation of territory for protected species concerning the Habitats Natura 2000 sites revealed that some member states designated more Natura 2000 sites than expected because at the time there was the belief that that funding would be used for the protection and restoration of those sites. By using this example, it is understood how

some states use environmental issues for receiving more funding. *"Ok, we'll accept higher standards but there needs to be some kind of side payment through other financial mechanisms to allow us to be able to meet our commitments"* as the interviewee (23) argued.

Sixth, from the environmental politics perspective, we would expect to see, due to the allocation of competencies under the principle of subsidiarity as analyzed above, the EU to be a regulatory state taking over the task of setting standards and promoting regulatory expansion. Reasonably, the regulatory expansion would reinforce the content and quality of environmental policies. Research findings build upon the theory contending that many environmental problems, such as the high number of environmental infringements in member states, have local or regional origins thus requiring broader cooperation with the EU (see Chapter 5). Simultaneously, this also shows that the delivery of policy may be unsuccessful. Against this backdrop, the EU Commission urges member states to implement correctly the policies pushing for higher environmental standards and ensuring the functioning of the single market. However, this does not mean that regulatory expansion and adoption of new policies are accepted positively by the national governments particularly during the economic crisis as seen mainly in the Central Eastern European states, the UK and Greece. Although it seems oxymoron, a very interesting research finding is that the European Commission under Juncker, in particular, seems to be moving in the opposite direction with the introduction of the 'REFIT' process, namely the withdrawal of specific provisions of the environmental legislation as an incentive to boost economic activity. From a critical point of view, there is a great antithesis between words and deeds, namely, official announcements and legislative actions as described above. This attitude has also been heavily criticized by many actors and especially all the NGOs portraying a clear backtracking of the EU from a sustainable path and undermining the goals of Europe 2020 during the economic crisis. In broader terms, it may be argued that the European Commission apparently sends out a contradictory message to the member states to openly challenge or refuse further regulatory expansion with the excuse that high environmental standards in times of crisis imply higher costs. Additionally, this message would give the sense that such as action is permitted by the EU institutions instigating a 'rebellion' by the member states against the adoption environmental

measures and implementation of EU environmental policy. In a sense, this reflects the argument of many member states that further costs cannot be borne due to fiscal or economic problems as seen in the case of Greece.

7.3. Fiscal Federalism

From the interpretative context of Chapter 3, fiscal federalism is examined through the lens of public economics and is concerned with the fiscal interactions and functions between the different levels of government (EU and Member states), that is, the exploratory analysis of how the expenditures and revenues are allocated in the governance system (Begg, 2009). Moreover, fiscal federalism mainly focuses on the provision of public goods and services, the redistribution of income, the macroeconomic stabilization and taxation (Oates, 1999). In this context, it seeks to increase the wellbeing of citizens derived from fiscal decentralization. Finally, it utilizes fiscal instruments related to taxation and intergovernmental transfers in the form of federal taxes, transfer payments, and grants. There are two types for the assignment of these grants to local governments: conditional and unconditional. In the first type, the federal government (EU) puts certain criteria on the assignment of grants to lower government (Member states) by agreeing to its plan of expenditures. In the second type, there are no specific expenditure requirements and the grant takes the form of cash or a tax point transfer (Obinger et al., 2005; Sellers and Lindstrom, 2007).

First, the main argument, as derives from the theory, is that when the market fails in the provision of public goods, state intervention is mandatory, stressing in this way the distributive character of power between the different levels of governance through fiscal instruments such as subsidies and intergovernmental grants. More explicitly, the theory indicates that the internalization of externalities and harmonization of standards necessitate EU intervention to secure the single market. From the empirical research in Chapters 5 and 6, it emerges that environmental damage as a policy outcome (see environmental infringements - e.g. air and water pollution, waste management etc.) has cross-boundary impacts and accounts for a market failure requiring central intervention

from the EU. The EU, in turn, internalizes the cost of implementing measures by granting specific financial programmes (e.g. Cohesion and Structural Funds) to its member states such as Greece as a 'laggard' (see Chapter 6). These funding programmes aim to achieve convergence, namely the bridging of the gap between the member states, 'leader' and 'laggards' by supporting policy implementation, increasing environmental standards, improving prosperity, offering better environmental services and quality. Reasonably, this is not to say that the common market performs at the optimum level, however, evidence shows that environmental infringements as policy outcomes during the economic crisis, in a first reading, would possibly reflect this form of distortion in the field of the environment within the single market (see Chapter 5). In a second reading, they essentially reveal the extent and nature of the problem and the policy outcomes at the level of the EU and member states. By this analysis, interestingly, one might expect that according to the principles of economic liberalism, EU intervention would be regarded as a significant barrier largely undesirable affecting the smooth functioning of the single market. Based on that, we may argue that the intervention of the European Commission is less governmental but more supervisory of the regulatory framework and the correct implementation of policies.

Second, drawing on the theory, we would expect to see that inequalities among the member states to be posing serious impediments and threats to the operation of the single market and free trade, particularly during the economic crisis. This would make the EU internalize the externalities and pressurize for more harmonization of environmental standards. Similarly, in protecting the single market there would be central control by which the main objective is to identify the inefficiencies and provide remedies in cases of unfair competition and protectionist practices by the member states. In the same vein, the empirical research concurs with the theory on fiscal equalization as the main driver due to economic discrepancies among the member states, especially in the Central-Eastern member states. What constitutes a relatively strong basis is the recognition that regional inequalities irrespective of the economic crisis have been a significant obstacle in the harmonization of environmental standards, prosperity, the high quality of services for all the EU citizens and the correct implementation. Bearing this in mind, the granting of financial assistance by the EU to member states seeks to secure a level playing field,

improve policy implementation and achieve common environmental standards. Interestingly, it has not been observed any striking increase or stalling of disbursement of European funds in the midst of the economic crisis in the member states, apart from the launching of the 7th EAP, which is the follow-up of the previous action programs.

Third, concerning the relationship between the two levels (EU-Member States), both the theory and research findings converge on the crucial role of distribution of power through decentralization. This is to say that the EU subsidizes the member states through various financial schemes as seen earlier to carry out the implementation of EU environmental policy at national level and achieve equal standards by offering high-quality environmental services. Empirical evidence shows that, despite the abundance of funding, states such as Greece have been great beneficiaries of such an economic aid but still face numerous implementation problems (see environmental infringements). The main problem lies in the endogenous drivers such as the lack of organizational and administrative capacity of the state mechanism to implement efficiently these policies which with the advent of economic crisis exacerbated (see Chapter 5). A prime example of that comparison is the existence of advisory bodies such as Environmental Agencies in Northern Europe and the UK that facilitate the policy implementation. Research evidence from some Greek interviewees (1-4) indicates that the role of local authorities is instrumental. They explained that local authorities are better informed about the environmental problems in their region responding more quickly and effectively to the requests of their citizens due to reasons of proximity. Equally important is also the role of public administration such as the fragmentation of agencies, overlapping and misallocation of competencies and staff affecting the policy implementation. From the Greece's example, it may be inferred that prosperity is not strengthened due to serious problems in the public administration (see Chapter 2 and 6). However, in comparison with the literature (see Chapter 2 and 6), this could be more likely to happen in the Northern European states known as 'leaders', due to better administrative capacity and economic condition.

Fourth, the empirical research does not seem to coincide with the theory in the allocation of competencies in light of the economic crisis. Drawing on the theory, it is suggested that decentralization allows the EU via the European Central Bank to take over

macroeconomic consolidation and member states to undertake the revenue allocation (see Chapter 3). While in a multilevel system of governance the EU, through its institutions, would be responsible for the macroeconomic consolidation and income redistribution, national governments would be preoccupied to use these resources to increase environmental standards and prosperity in their jurisdiction. In contrast, the research findings show that member states bear the responsibility of retaining the fiscal stability of their economies. In doing so, it cannot be deduced that the use of subsidies, based on the particular preferences of the member states, end up in strengthening economic well-being since national standards may vary accordingly. However, the common link between the theory and empirical research is that the distinction of competencies makes the supervision of the EU easier and more efficient in detecting malfunctions considering the different degree of economic development on each member state and the provision of economic financial programmes.

Fifth, according to the theory, for the 'leader-laggard' relationship, we would expect to see that the inter-jurisdictional competition creates regional imbalances between the rich and poor states leading to economic differences and affecting the policy implementation in times of economic crisis. Consequently, this would result in the transfer of financial resources in the form of subsidies or grants by the EU or the wealthier to the poorer states as a counterbalance to fiscal equalization. From the empirical research is shown that there is clearly an economic competition between the member states in the name of the single market but not a transfer of funding from the richer to the poorer EU member states. In a competitive environment, such as the EU, regional imbalances are developed among the richer Northern member states (UK), poorer Southern (Greece) and Central Eastern not only in terms of environmental standards as observed in former communist states but also on economic growth. Arguably, economic growth is seen as imperative but a more significant finding is the weak institutional and administrative capacity of the state and public administration as both case studies affirm (see Chapter 6). Alongside, other reasons would be the lack of political will, culture such as individualistic mindset combined with strong economic interests. Concurrently, a transfer of financial resources has been observed from the EU through programmes such as the Cohesion and Structural Funds to those that were lagging behind compared to their northern counterparts. Greece is a

good example of such a great beneficiary. The gap between the theory and empirical research lies in the fact that there is no link that presents any additional transfer of financial resources or subsidies from the rich (North) to poor states (East-South) during the economic crisis apart from those projected from the EU to the Member states through the 7th EAP.

Sixth, concerning environmental politics, drawing on the theory we would expect to see that the way of achieving fiscal equalization hinges on the level of economic growth. This means that 'leaders', being better off economically, would tackle more efficiently the environmental problems. In contrast, 'laggards' plagued by economic difficulties would not be able to keep up with the 'leaders' due to a lack of economic resources. Instead, economic growth would be prioritized against the environment. Consequently, this would take the form of minimizing the costs of environmental measures since the implementation of environmental policies incurs high adaptation costs. Acknowledging that these financial programmes have been a bold step towards fiscal equalization, research findings concur largely with the theory at this point, arguing that 'leader' states (UK) enjoying high levels of economic growth, wealth and strong domestic structures makes them implement EU environmental policy at a lower cost. On the contrary, 'laggards', (Greece), in the midst of economic problems prioritize economic stability and fiscal consolidation at the expense of the implementation of environmental policy in the name of growth. For the latter, the high adaptation cost is understandably a critical factor that affects the degree of implementation (see Chapter 2). Admittedly, the financial programmes as referred to above (Cohesion and Structural Funds) have succeeded to reach a certain level of convergence, despite the fiscal inequality in many member states, by enhancing policy implementation and capacity, and increasing environmental standards to tackle environmental problems.

7.4. Critiques on the Federal Approaches

The analysis of the theoretically informed discussion of the empirical findings above offers some basic critiques. These are centered on the utility and applicability of the different federal approaches addressing the 'leader-laggard' dynamic and the implementation of EU environmental policy (policy outputs and outcomes) during the economic crisis. As seen in this thesis, cooperative and regulatory federalism provide a profound analysis and explanations on the distribution of power (top-down process), task allocation (EU undertakes the policy making/setting standards and the member states the policy implementation), interactions between the supranational and national level (mainly through cooperative spirit despite the antagonistic relations with some member states such as the UK) in a multi-level system of governance such as the EU. Similarly, they focus and explain more systematically and methodically the actions of 'leaders' (UK) and 'laggards' (Greece) in downloading/implementing policies by pointing out the main challenges, policy outputs (transposition, compliance, enforcement and application problems) and outcomes (high environmental standards and cleaner environment) as well as the endogenous (institutional and administrative capacity, economic condition and costs, environmental awareness) and exogenous drivers (environmental protection, single market and international agreements). In so doing, a comprehensive picture of the implementation patterns in the EU and the two case studies is provided. On the contrary, although fiscal federalism develops a good account of the distribution of power through decentralization by explaining the inter-jurisdictional economic competition and the need of fiscal equalization among the member states during the economic crisis, it appears to have some basic gaps. In spite of the attempt to illustrate how 'leaders' (UK) and 'laggards' (Greece) implement policies, fiscal federalism cannot fully investigate and develop some of the basic functions such as the allocation of competences, the fiscal interactions of both levels and the fiscal form of the union thus resulting in more generic observations.

Drawing on these, I will develop the five main criticisms as emerge from the analysis of the three federal perspectives. To begin with, the first criticism regards that, at times, the line between cooperative and regulatory federalism may become blurred. This is to say,

that overlaps in the analysis and understanding despite the rich and comprehensive context of both approaches may be seen. Consequently, these overlaps may give the sense that a large part of the analysis is somehow 'duplicated'. The main risk here is for the reader to be conceptually disoriented thus ending up to wrong conclusions. A second criticism, linked to the previous point, lies in the lucidity and refinement of the conceptual context and analysis. In this regard, the lack of clarity may lead to theoretically incomplete interpretations regarding the value and contribution of the cooperative and regulatory federalism to policy implementation. The third criticism is based on the need for a more structured and in-depth analysis of the economic and fiscal interactions in the EU. More specifically, according to the above analysis, fiscal federalism is unable to capture and explain clearly the relations between the EU and member states and hence the resulting implementation trends. To some extent, fiscal federalism may give the impression of a simplistic description of the EU as a multi-governance system without addressing precisely the implementation dynamics in EU member states. Consequently, further lucidity is required to evaluate its impact and long-range contribution to the understanding of the fiscal functions of the EU and the 'downloading' of policies.

The fourth critique is associated with the role of the NGOs in the UK (see Chapter 6). Despite the explanatory context, none of the federal approaches above addressed how important the influence of the NGO community is in policy implementation. The characterization of watchdog or guardian in the monitoring of the environmental policy implementation in a 'leader' state (UK) shows the capacity and the strong supervisory role of external bodies such as the NGO community (see Chapter 6). Based on that, the demand for correct application of policies and better environmental outcomes in the context of EU environmental strategies (Europe 2020) during the economic crisis has, arguably, attracted the interest and active role of new actors. Their involvement in the observation and control of the implementation process apart from the traditional advisory bodies of the government seems very positive.

Finally, the fifth critique is focused on the impact of the economic crisis on policy implementation at the level of the EU and member states. While much of the analysis of the federal approaches relies on policy implementation ('top-down' process) in normal

times, the impact of the economic crisis on the capacity of member states to implement correctly and efficiently the EU environmental policies has attributed to this study a great interpretative value. This means that, comparatively to prior studies, the interpretation and explanation of the implementation of EU environmental policy in terms of policy outputs and outcomes during the economic crisis, based on the availability of data, has depicted in realistic terms the implementation problems in two case studies, the UK as a 'leader' and Greece as 'laggard'. The systematic examination of these two case studies reveals that the 'leader-laggard' dynamic is not subject to shallow or biased accounts but is strongly connected to a thorough examination of various political and economic factors and drivers at the national and international level. From this perspective, the study of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic during the economic crisis set the foundations for a better understanding and investigation of the issue of policy implementation.

Conclusion

To sum up, the analysis of the theoretically informed discussion shows that there is a strong connection between the theoretical framework and the research findings in this thesis proving that federal theory justifiably provides a more contemporary view of the EU as a multi-level system of governance. The comparison of the theoretical context of the empirical research also demonstrated the utility and advantage of federal perspectives to explain the 'leader-laggard' dynamic by focusing on the different functions and characteristics. Furthermore, it not only offered the opportunity for a more nuanced analysis but also made clear and highlighted how the case studies, Greece as traditional 'laggard' and the UK as a purported 'leader' fit into the models of the federal theory. More specifically, the analysis provided essentially confirms the strong footprint of cooperative and regulatory federalism, where more similarities than differences identified thus being a good fit for the theorization of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic. On the other hand, the analysis has a relatively weaker fit into fiscal federalism due to a lack of strong evidence. Although some useful lessons can be drawn from the latter, in fact, more testing and evidence would be required for stronger conclusions. Overall, the systematic and

consistent explanations offered by the federal theory within a very analytical framework contribute to a better understanding of the EU and the 'leader-laggard' dynamic.

Chapter 8 – Conclusions

8.1. Aims and Objectives

As outlined in the introduction of this thesis (see Chapter 1) the main aim of this research was to re-examine the implementation of EU environmental policy and the ‘leader-laggard’ dynamic after the advent of the economic crisis in 2008. In this regard, the employment of the federal theory sought to give a fresh look and a more contemporary theorization of the EU and the main goals linked to Europe 2020. A review of the literature on EU environmental policy gave rise to four research objectives:

- 1) Map the environmental policy implementation patterns in EU member states and the ‘leader-laggard’ dynamic following the 2008 credit crunch.
- 2) Produce two in-depth case studies, in the context of the EU, on the environmental policy implementation including one purported ‘leader’ (UK) and one traditional ‘laggard’ (Greece).
- 3) Use federal theory perspectives to explore the influential factors shaping the ‘Leader-Laggard’ dynamic in EU environmental policy.
- 4) Use the theory of federalism for a more contemporary theorization of the EU.

Objective 1 has been addressed in Chapter 5 with the mapping out of the broader implementation patterns in EU member states. Initially, from the empirical findings is indicated that the impact of economic crisis on the implementation of EU environmental policy was important but affected the member states to a varying degree. More explicitly, the impact on ‘leader’ states such as Germany, the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Austria and the UK was not very strong due to a better economic condition, strong policy structures, institutional and administrative capacity, sophisticated public administration and high environmental awareness. Interestingly, the inter-comparison of the ‘leader’ states has demonstrated that the vast majority continue to have better policy

outcomes as witnessed by the low number of environmental infringements (see Table 5.3.1. in Chapter 5). On the contrary, 'laggard' states such Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and Greece were hit more severely by the economic crisis and austerity measures at the economic level thus weakening the capacity of their public administrations to implement EU environmental policy more efficiently. This is largely due to a weaker economy, fragmented policy structures, weak institutions, lack of infrastructure, ineffective public administration and low level of environmental awareness. From a cross-country comparison including only 'laggards' (see table 5.3.1. in Chapter 5) there were significant differences amongst them in terms of policy outcomes. More specifically, Ireland and Portugal look like more of a 'leader' than a 'laggard' in contrast to Greece and Spain, having a sharp decline of their environmental infringements. Differences in performance (policy outputs and outcomes) among the 28 member states shows that systemic and structural problems are still dominant in the majority of member states thus making implementation a complex and costly process (see also the discussion on implementation in Chapter 1). Similarly, policy implementation is subject to strong pressures from endogenous factors at the national level (economic position and costs, organizational and administrative capacity, environmental awareness) and exogenous at the international level (environmental protection, single market and transboundary nature of environmental challenges). Finally, economic costs turned out to be a key factor in the implementation of EU environmental policy both for the 'leaders' (UK) and 'laggards'.

Objective 2, was primarily addressed in Chapter 6 with the analysis and comparison of two in-depth case studies of a reputed 'leader' (UK) and a traditional 'laggard' (Greece). The study of these two countries revealed that the impact of the economic crisis in Greece was stronger than in the UK, not only for economic reasons such as big debts and deficits but also for administrative and organizational issues linked to the capacity of the public administration. The examination of Greece as a 'laggard' showed that the major economic problems the national economy reflect largely the structural weaknesses of the state apparatus. Given that the implementation performance of Greece has never been outstanding, the economic crisis seems to have weakened the actual capacity to implement and tipped the balance in favor of economic growth. The UK, on the other hand, has demonstrated better implementation performance linked to policy outputs such

as better compliance and application of policies than Greece due to strong institutional capacity, better economic condition and a sophisticated public administration. The economic crisis seems to have operated as a lever for better policy implementation as seen by the continuous downward trend of environmental infringements after 2008 (see table 5.3.1. in Chapter 5). It may be argued that both for a 'leader' and a 'laggard' the issue of cost is very important. From the empirical findings in Chapter 6, the UK seemed more determined than Greece to correct its domestic implementation problems of environmental policy since any policy failures entail fines and higher costs, in particular, for those countries that in times of austerity are seeking ways to support the domestic economy. Interestingly, both countries heavily prioritize economic growth against the adoption and implementation of environmental legislation.

Objectives 3 and 4 were addressed in Chapters 3 and 7 with the use of federalism as the main theoretical framework of this thesis upon which a more contemporary theorization of the EU was provided. More specifically, in Chapter 3, the different federal approaches provided a more subtle analysis on the distribution of power, task allocation, the interaction between the EU and member states and policy implementation in a system of multi-level governance. Furthermore, in Chapter 7, the analysis of the theoretically informed discussion of the theory and empirical findings has shown that cooperative and regulatory federalism are a better fit in the analysis of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic for the reasons mentioned above than fiscal federalism which, in turn, requires further empirical testing.

8.2. Understanding the impact of the economic crisis

As demonstrated in this research, the impact of the economic crisis affected EU member states to a varying degree. However, contrary to expectations, the implementation of EU environmental policy was not significantly influenced by the economic crisis as many EU member states improved their performance (see Chapter 5). In terms of performance, the UK as a purported 'leader' has seen great improvement in comparison to Greece as a traditional 'laggard'. As analyzed in Chapter 6, some of the reasons lie in the endogenous

factors such as the strong administrative capacity and the better economic condition. The economic crisis, arguably, questioned the capacity of the states and public administration to implement and raised concerns about the cost of environmental policies in times of economic crisis. In such a context, the issue of cost became a major issue with the excuse of being an additional financial burden that affects the national budgets and the competitiveness of EU member states, as seen in the two case studies and the Central-Eastern European states. However, the better economic position of the 'leaders' compared to 'laggards' played a crucial role to tone down the actual implications, as seen in the UK compared to Greece (see Chapter 6). However, it may be argued that the obsession of costs regarding policy implementation is not the result of the economic crisis but is seen a general feature of the national governments to avoid them on issues of minor importance such as the environment. This is clearly reflected in the fierce opposition of the UK, Greece and the Central-Eastern European states to the adoption and implementation of the environmental legislation. In addition, the economic crisis and austerity have affected the level of funding allocation and investments in the environmental sector. In some cases, such as Greece, many environmental projects have stalled or postponed (see Chapter 6). Amid a climate of uncertainty, many voices have argued that funding allocation for environmental activities is a needless luxury that does not keep up with current economic conditions, as seen in the UK. From a political perspective, the impact of economic crisis lowered the environmental ambitions and expectations as well as the political interest to push for stricter environmental standards due to economic issues such as fiscal consolidation and stability. Amid the financial uncertainty, national governments consciously opt to sacrifice the implementation of environmental policy on the altar of growth (see Chapter 5). This would mean that growth is more attractive due to high political gains. The dominance of the economic agenda, particularly in the cases of Greece and UK (see Chapter 6), points out that national governments proved to be quite hesitant or less courageous to support environmental policies because of the strong endogenous factors.

8.3. Analysis of research findings

Following the impact of the economic crisis the main research findings are developed here. The first finding has an administrative dimension related to the issue of the public administration and the strong role of NGO community, particularly in the UK. Public administration, arguably, represents the main mechanism of the state through which the application of policies take shape. From the analysis of Chapter 6 is shown that Greece lacks a strong public administrative mechanism compared to the UK to efficiently implement the EU environmental policies. This structural and systemic weakness is connected to over-regulation, fragmentation of policies, misallocation of competencies and staff. On the contrary, while the UK may not live up to its reputation as a 'Rolls Royce' (see Chapter 2 and 6) public administration, it demonstrates very good compliance and implementation of policies due to a sophisticated public mechanism and the involvement of advisory bodies such as the Environment Agency. Besides that, the role of the NGO community, as seen in Chapter 6, in policy implementation is very critical. More specifically, their characterization as watchdog or guardian indicates the high pressure exercised on the national government for the correct implementation of EU environmental policy in the UK. Simultaneously, it is also witnessed the advantage of 'leaders' against the 'laggards' in engaging, beyond the traditional actors, the NGOs in monitoring the implementation process. In a sense, their involvement confirms the value of civil society.

The second finding has a clear economic aspect related to costs. As shown from the empirical findings in Chapter 5 and 6, a large number of EU countries are opposed to the adoption of stricter environmental regulations and implementation of environmental policies due to economic problems and fiscal deficits which have been compounded by the 2008 economic crisis. Therefore, the opposition and resistance of the national governments is higher due to costs. This view is corroborated both for the UK as 'leader' and Greece as 'laggard'. More specifically, in the UK the issue of costs for the government tends to be an obsession as it rests on the idea that environmental regulations entail additional costs that cannot be afforded in times of recession thus affecting the competitiveness of the British businesses. By this description, it is understood that strong lobbying from the industrial and economic sector affects the priorities and decision-

making of the government. Considering that the UK has always had these concerns about the economy, it is not surprising that there is a clear precedence on growth by minimizing the economic costs. Likewise, in the case of Greece, the issue of cost is high on the political agenda. In an economy mired in recession with high unemployment, the adoption of stricter environmental standards and implementation of policies are seen in the eyes of the Greek government as an unnecessary burden thus being more reluctant (see Chapter 6). The same economic perception is also shared by the Central-Eastern countries with regard to environmental legislation (see Chapter 5). This stance, arguably, should not be seen as a temporary phenomenon but a condition in which strong domestic factors such as high unemployment and the need for growth shape an 'anti-environmental' attitude. A less conspicuous but important factor would be the structural economic dependence on fossil fuels that prevents them from advocating a very EU green agenda (see Chapter 5). In this context, there is a strong belief that environmental policies are seen as costly luxury or unnecessary financial burden particularly in times of austerity. In this light, growth is well off of the agenda but the environment is more of a case as a luxury in relation to cuts in budget and lifestyles. In this regard, any environmental initiative is addressed by high suspicion or reluctance. In view of these costs, national governments are less willing to embrace ambitious environmental targets as a counterweight to possible social unrest and economic meltdown. On the other hand, although costs are significant obstacles to the implementation of policies, this contradicts with the EU official quantified assessments and reports (see DG Environment - The costs of not implementing the environmental acquis, Final Report, September 2011) which have demonstrated that the cost of environmental policy implementation is very low. Unsurprisingly, the promotion of a pro-growth agenda for many member states is one-way to tackle their chronic and current economic problems.

A third finding is that during the economic crisis there has been an even stronger tendency to relax standards in order to stimulate economic activity by both the EU and member states. While the European Commission incentivizes actions associated with the upgrade of regulatory standards, from the empirical findings in Chapter 5 and 6, is shown that there has been a kind of detachment from a stricter environmental regulatory framework on the grounds of growth, competitiveness and high costs. In such a way, the nature and

level of debate between the EU and the member states have revolved around the promotion of fiscal consolidation and stability and the reduction of the scale of regulation as a brake on growth. A sign of that was the adoption of "REFIT" process, namely the consideration of the burden of environmental legislation. In a sense, these actions imply that weakening the environmental regulation can boost economic growth as manifested by the political guidelines of the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker. Although this can be interpreted as a clear retreat to the green agenda, simultaneously it conceals an internal political dispute at the top EU level. This would include the European Parliament known as the green supporter with some member states theoretically backed by the European Commission to exercise strong pressures and prevent the EU from adopting a strict set of environmental measures that are against competitiveness and economic growth, as largely seen in the case of Visegrad countries. An additional factor that feeds into these environmental concerns is the lack of strong environmental orientation in European strategies which holds the pro-growth agenda up. In a strictly developmental context, the environment seems to lose out because the brunt is placed mainly on economic targets. An example of this critique is that before the beginning of the economic crisis the core priority of the Lisbon Strategy was the generation of jobs and growth and now in the run-up to Europe 2020 the main focus still remains in the line of competitiveness and growth. More explicitly, the priorities prior to economic crisis as set out for the 2007 – 2014 program period, were clearly economic. A prime example is the need for growth and jobs as enunciated by the previous President of the European Commission, Manuel Barroso. In this context, short-term economic objectives are highly prioritized and seen as of immediate action against the long-term environmental policies and plans.

8.4. Future Research

As referred to above, the analysis of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic in this thesis illuminated many of the political and economic aspects in the implementation of EU environmental policy. In a broader context, this research laid the foundations for a better understanding of the various implementation dynamics and regulatory trends at the domestic and supranational level under a more contemporary theorization through federalism. However, a critical factor is that much of this research is defined in terms of 'downloading' by explaining the different implementation patterns without analyzing the 'uploading' process through specific case studies. A critical stepping stone for future research would be the investigation of other policy areas, such as economics, in comparison to the findings of this thesis on the implementation of EU environment policy during the economic crisis. In a sense, this study would put a stronger focus on the dynamics between 'uploading' and 'downloading' of policies. Alongside, the investigation of fiscal imbalances among the member states as a result of debts and deficits and the various environmental challenges would be of great interest. Particularly, future research would also be based on EU highly publicized goals and growth strategies, such as Europe 2020 or Europe 2030 with the climate and energy framework and Europe 2050 with low carbon economy. The consideration of these objectives would illuminate the political and economic dimension in the transition to a sustainable and de-carbonated economy.

Some of the lessons and experience drawn from this thesis suggest that the selection criteria of future case studies could include countries of similar characteristics, such as member of the Eurozone, to further test and re-assess the concept of 'leaders' and 'laggards'. Moreover, it would be useful if the case studies had similarities in the type of the political system such as federalism in order to examine the practicality of the federal theory both at domestic and the EU level (for example Spain and Germany). The research methodology could be based on elite interviews, documentary analysis and descriptive statistics. To gain first-hand experience, the researcher could focus on a broad and diverse sample of participants from the government and industry sector.

Finally, undertaking a wider research approach would be vital for the understanding of EU's approach to the increasing challenges of environmental policy in the midst of a

continuing economic and identity crisis fueled by Euroscepticism across many parts of Europe. Such a case was the recent referendum in the UK (Brexit) which openly contested the EU basic principles and policies. In this regard, the EU's response to this ongoing existential crisis is highly anticipated with regard to the environmental policy as a success story.

8.5. Contributions to knowledge

The completion of this thesis provides some key contributions to knowledge. Although many scholars have attempted to rank countries based on their environmental performance (Andersen and Liefferink, 1997; Börzel, 2003; Liefferink et al., 2009; Knill et al., 2012), and few have done so by analyzing the policy outputs (see Liefferink et al., 2009; Holzinger et al., 2011; Knill et al., 2012) this thesis has focused mainly on the combination of both. This research investigates the implementation of EU environmental policy by adopting a comparative approach of a purported 'leader' (UK) and a traditional 'laggard' (Greece) in order to capture and explain the implementation dynamics and regulatory trends during the economic crisis. In the absence of a comprehensive and in-depth analysis, the employment of different methodologies by prior studies disclosed many shortcomings resulting in a rather blurred picture of this dynamic. In some of the existing literature, the classification of 'leaders' and 'laggards' is accompanied by generalizations, stereotypical accounts and outdated analyses first outlined in the 1990s, such as the 'Mediterranean Syndrome' (see Chapter 2). Considering that much of the existing research focuses on broad analyses, some of the deeper dynamics occurred may be missed. Hence, the generalized and simplified explanations pose the risk of misinterpreting the current developments and trends at European or international level especially during the economic crisis.

To reduce the gap in knowledge from the existing studies and enhance the understanding of the 'leader-laggard' dynamic, this research was based on a combination of research methods to provide a more in-depth and nuanced account of the EU environmental policy implementation. By the use of elite interviews, documentary analysis and descriptive

statistics (environmental infringements), this thesis sought to interpret more explicitly the policy outputs and outcomes as well as the endogenous and exogenous pressures that lead to implementation deficit and shape the 'leader-laggard' dynamic during the economic crisis. Therefore, it set out the broader implementation patterns of EU member states and used two case studies, one purported 'leader' (UK) and one traditional 'laggard' (Greece). Notably, the case studies in this thesis operated as plausibility probes to check the applicability and validity of the federal theory and test in practice the 'leader-laggard' dynamic in two well-established member states but with distinct differences in their implementation performance. Additionally, this thesis explored the current condition of the EU by the use of federalism. In particular, a more contemporary theorization was provided to enhance the knowledge of the EU as a multilevel system of governance. While the theories of Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism sought to explain the dynamics of the European integration and governance from a state-centric perspective, a more contemporary interpretation of the EU integration and 'leader-laggard' dynamic was deployed far from monolithic accounts. In addition, the state of federalization of the EU makes federalism a theoretically attractive theory for the examination of the task allocation, distribution of power and interactions between the domestic and supranational level and policy implementation. More importantly, as others have used the prism of federalism to study the EU, the innovation in this thesis is that federalism seeks to theorize the 'leader-laggard' dynamic in the absence of the existing literature. In this light, federalism explained the key features and implementation dynamics of 'leaders' and 'laggards' in the EU context and made strong comparisons in the 'downloading' of environmental policy during the economic crisis.

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Appendix:

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Interview questions

In English:

Interview

1) Introduction

- Brief overview of the research project (Aim, how long, confidentiality and recording issues, how the interviewee wants to be referred)

2) Personal details and experience

- What is your background?
- What is your current role and position?
- How long have you been in this position?
- What responsibilities does it involve?
- Which projects have you been involved with?

Main body of the interview

3) Environment

- How would you assess the current overall effectiveness of EU Environmental Policy?
- How does current effectiveness differ from past experience?
- What do you think could be a solution for better implementation and monitoring of the EU environmental policies? (Granting of more financial resources, decentralization of competencies) Why/why not
- What is the main driver for having a common environmental policy?
- Has the relevance of these drivers changed over time?
- What is the relationship of EU with the Member States as regards the environmental policy and vice versa? Are there any coalitions or groupings depending on their interests? Why?]
- What is the impact of the ECJ rulings regarding environmental violations?

4) Policy making and Implementation

- At what stage and what kind of obstacles are encountered in the process of policy making and implementation?
- What are the main benefits and losses for the Member States from the adoption of EU environmental measures?
- Why do some Member States seem to be reluctant or willing to assist in a more advanced environmental framework?

- What is the dynamics of Greece/UK in environmental agenda setting and implementation?
- Are there any third factors taking part in this process?

5) Economic crisis

- How has economic crisis affected the environmental initiatives and objectives of the EU environmental policy?
- Have austerity measures made an impact in the EU/ Greece/UK? How?
- Are there any tradeoffs have to be made? (Environmental protection vs Economic development)
- Can the economic status of a country be a significant factor in the promotion of the environmental targets? Why/why not
- To what extent does the economic differentiation between the Member States contribute to strict or lax regulatory policies?
- Is the divergence of environmental standards and tax competition between the Member States an obstacle for the integration of EU environmental policy?
- In terms of economic cost how would you characterize the EU environmental policy?

6) Domestic Environmental Context

- How would you describe the environmental performance of Greece/UK?
- What are the basic characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of domestic environmental policy?

7) The end of the interview

- Are there any other points that you think are important?
- Can you think of anyone else I should speak to?

In Greek:

Συνέντευξη

1) Εισαγωγή

- Σύντομη ανασκόπηση του ερευνητικού έργου (Σκοπός, διάρκεια, εμπιστευτικότητα, ηχογράφηση, πώς ο ερωτώμενος θέλει να αναφέρεται)

2) Προσωπικά στοιχεία και εμπειρία

- Ποιο είναι το επαγγελματικό σας υπόβαθρο;
- Ποιος είναι ο τρέχον ρόλος και η θέση σας;
- Πόσο καιρό είστε σε αυτή τη θέση;
- Ποιες ευθύνες περιλαμβάνει;
- Με τι είδους έργα έχετε ασχοληθεί;

Το κύριο σώμα της συνέντευξης

3) Περιβάλλον

- Πώς θα αξιολογούσατε την τρέχουσα συνολική αποτελεσματικότητα της περιβαλλοντικής πολιτικής της ΕΕ;
- Σε τι διαφέρει από την εμπειρία του παρελθόντος;
- Τι νομίζετε ότι θα μπορούσε να αποτελέσει λύση για την καλύτερη εφαρμογή και παρακολούθηση των περιβαλλοντικών πολιτικών της ΕΕ; (Χορήγηση περισσότερων οικονομικών πόρων, αποκέντρωση των αρμοδιοτήτων) Γιατί / γιατί όχι
- Ποια είναι η βασική κινητήριος δύναμη για την ύπαρξη μιας κοινής πολιτικής για το περιβάλλον;
- Υπάρχει κάποια αλλαγή στη σχέση/συνάφεια αυτών των δυνάμεων/δυναμικής με την πάροδο του χρόνου;
- Ποια είναι η σχέση της ΕΕ με τα κράτη μέλη όσον αφορά την περιβαλλοντική πολιτική και το αντίστροφο; [τριβή, συνεργασία, ανταγωνισμός; Υπάρχουν συμμαχίες ή ομάδες, ανάλογα με τα συμφέροντά τους εκεί; Γιατί;]
- Ποιες είναι οι επιπτώσεις των αποφάσεων του Ευρωπαϊκού Δικαστηρίου σχετικά με τις περιβαλλοντικές παραβιάσεις;

4) Χάραξη Πολιτικής και Εφαρμογή

- Σε ποιο στάδιο και τι είδους εμπόδια ανακύπτουν κατά τη διαδικασία χάραξης πολιτικής και εφαρμογής;
- Ποια είναι τα κύρια οφέλη/ζημίες για τα κράτη μέλη από την υιοθέτηση των περιβαλλοντικών μέτρων της ΕΕ;
- Γιατί ορισμένα κράτη μέλη φαίνεται να είναι απρόθυμα/διστακτικά ή πρόθυμα να βοηθήσουν σε ένα πιο αυστηρό περιβαλλοντικό πλαίσιο;
- Ποια είναι η δυναμική της Ελλάδας / Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου όσον αφορά τον καθορισμό

της περιβαλλοντικής ατζέντας και εφαρμογής;

- Πιστεύετε ότι τα προβλήματα αυτά είναι μοναδικά/ξεχωριστά στην περιβαλλοντική πολιτική ή έχουν ένα πιο ενδημικό χαρακτήρα όσον αφορά τα κράτη που ενσωματώνουν την Ευρωπαϊκή πολιτική;

5) Οικονομική κρίση

- Πώς η οικονομική κρίση έχει επηρεάσει τις περιβαλλοντικές πρωτοβουλίες και στόχους της περιβαλλοντικής πολιτικής της ΕΕ;
- Υπάρχει κάποιος αντίκτυπος από τα μέτρα λιτότητας στην ΕΕ / Ελλάδα / Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο; Πώς;
- Υπάρχουν κάποιοι συμβιβασμοί που πρέπει να γίνουν; (Προστασία του περιβάλλοντος vs Οικονομική ανάπτυξη)
- Μπορεί η οικονομική κατάσταση μιας χώρας να είναι ένας σημαντικός παράγοντας για την προώθηση των περιβαλλοντικών στόχων; Γιατί / γιατί όχι
- Σε ποιο βαθμό η οικονομική διαφοροποίηση μεταξύ των κρατών μελών συμβάλλει σε αυστηρές ή χαλαρές ρυθμιστικές πολιτικές όσον αφορά το περιβάλλον;
- Μπορεί η απόκλιση των περιβαλλοντικών προτύπων και φορολογικού ανταγωνισμού μεταξύ των κρατών μελών να αποτελέσει εμπόδιο για την ολοκλήρωση της περιβαλλοντικής πολιτικής της ΕΕ;
- Με όρους οικονομικού κόστους, πώς θα χαρακτηρίζατε την περιβαλλοντική πολιτική της ΕΕ;

6) Εγχώριο Περιβαλλοντικό Πλαίσιο

- Πώς θα περιγράφατε την εγχώρια (μη επιβαλλόμενη από την ΕΕ) περιβαλλοντική επίδοση της Ελλάδας / Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου;
- Ποια είναι τα βασικά χαρακτηριστικά, πλεονεκτήματα και αδυναμίες της εγχώριας περιβαλλοντικής πολιτικής;

7) Τέλος της συνέντευξης

- Υπάρχουν κάποια άλλα σημεία τα οποία θεωρείτε ότι είναι σημαντικά/άξια λόγου;
- Μπορείτε να σκεφτείτε κάποιον άλλο που θα μπορούσε να μου μιλήσει;

Information sheet for the participants

In English:

Guide Information/Consent Form for interviews

Title of Research Project

“Analyzing the “Leader-Laggard” dynamic in the context of EU Environmental Policy: A Federal Perspective”

Details of Project

The current research project is concerned with the environmental policy in European Union member states. It explores a ‘leader-laggard’ dynamic comparing the degree and speed of adoption and implementation of the EU Environmental policies by the member states at the international level. The classification of Leaders and Laggards in environmental policy stresses the importance of a significant gap between environmental policy adaptation and implementation in some member states after the advent of the economic crisis (2008). This has resulted in many inefficiencies, imbalances and implementation failures among the member states leading to a two-speed European Union (North-South division). The research will provide insights into the feasibility of the EU's plans to link economic recovery to strong or high environmental standards as outlined in the various flagship initiatives such as Europe 2020. It will also explore, theorize and explain the leader-laggard dynamic between different member states within EU environmental policy making. Moreover, it aims at making contributions to the debates of the EU in general and environmental policy- making more specifically in light of the 2008 financial crisis. Finally, the results of this research will be published to academic publications.

Contact Details

For further information about the research or your interview data, please contact:
Michail Melidis - Department of Politics, Exeter University, Exeter, Devon, UK.
mm469@ex.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr Duncan Russel, d.j.russel@ex.ac.uk, Tel: +44(0)1392 263182

Confidentiality

Interview tapes and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). However, if you request it, you will be supplied with a copy of your interview transcript so that you can comment on and edit it as you see fit. Your data will be held in accordance with the United Kingdom data protection regulations. Recordings and transcripts will be encrypted and stored on a secured hard disc. The participants in the research will be coded according to their background (e.g.

In Greek:

ΟΔΗΓΟΣ ΕΝΤΥΠΟ ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΩΝ / ΣΥΝΑΙΝΕΣΗ ΓΙΑ ΣΥΝΕΝΤΕΥΞΕΙΣ

Τίτλος του ερευνητικού προγράμματος

"Αναλύοντας τη δυναμική " Ηγετών - Ουραγών ", στο πλαίσιο της περιβαλλοντικής πολιτικής της ΕΕ: μια Ομοσπονδιακή Προοπτική "

Λεπτομέρειες της Έρευνας

Το τρέχον ερευνητικό έργο ασχολείται με την περιβαλλοντική πολιτική στα κράτη μέλη της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Διερευνά την δυναμική "Ηγετών - Ουραγών" χώρων συγκρίνοντας το βαθμό και την ταχύτητα υιοθέτησης και εφαρμογής των περιβαλλοντικών πολιτικών της ΕΕ από τα κράτη μέλη σε διεθνές επίπεδο. Η κατηγοριοποίηση "Ηγετών - Ουραγών" στην περιβαλλοντική πολιτική τονίζει τη σημασία της σημαντικής διαφοράς μεταξύ της περιβαλλοντικής πολιτικής προσαρμογής και εφαρμογής σε ορισμένα κράτη μέλη, μετά την έλευση της οικονομικής κρίσης (2008). Αυτό έχει ως αποτέλεσμα πολλές ανεπάρκειες, ανισορροπίες και αποτυχίες στην εφαρμογή μεταξύ των κρατών μελών οδηγώντας σε μια Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση δύο ταχυτήτων (διαίρεση Βορρά-Νότου). Η έρευνα θα παρέχει γνώσεις σχετικά με τη σκοπιμότητα των σχεδίων της ΕΕ για τη σύνδεση της οικονομικής ανάκαμψης με ισχυρά ή υψηλά περιβαλλοντικά πρότυπα, όπως περιγράφεται στις διάφορες εμβληματικές πρωτοβουλίες, Ευρώπη 2020. Επίσης θα διερευνήσει, θα προβάλλει ένα θεωρητικό πλαίσιο και θα εξηγήσει την δυναμική "Ηγετών-Ουραγών" στο πλαίσιο χάραξης της Ευρωπαϊκής περιβαλλοντικής πολιτικής. Επιπρόσθετα, στοχεύει να συνεισφέρει στις συζητήσεις της ΕΕ και της περιβαλλοντικής πολιτικής εν γένει, ειδικότερα υπό το πρίσμα της οικονομικής κρίσης του 2008. Τέλος, τα αποτελέσματα αυτής της έρευνας θα δημοσιευθούν σε ακαδημαϊκές δημοσιεύσεις.

Στοιχεία Επικοινωνίας

Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με την έρευνα ή τα δεδομένα συνέντευξής σας, παρακαλούμε επικοινωνήστε με: Michail Melidis Department of Politics, Exeter University, Exeter, Devon, UK.

Tel: 00 44 (0) 7534030418, mm469@ex.ac.uk, 0030 6973829627, mixmelidis@yahoo.gr

Εάν έχετε ανησυχίες / ερωτήσεις σχετικά με την έρευνα που θα θέλατε να συζητήσετε με κάποιον άλλο στο Πανεπιστήμιο, παρακαλούμε επικοινωνήστε με: Dr Duncan Russel, d.j.russel@ex.ac.uk, Tel:

+44(0)1392 263182

Εμπιστευτικότητα

Η μαγνητοφώνηση της συνέντευξης και το αντίγραφο της θα πραγματοποιηθούν εμπιστευτικά. Δεν θα χρησιμοποιηθούν για άλλους σκοπούς πέραν αυτών που περιγράφηκαν παραπάνω και δεν θα επιτρέπεται η πρόσβαση σε αυτά από τρίτα πρόσωπα (εκτός εάν αυτό απαιτείται από το νόμο). Ωστόσο, αν το ζητήσετε, θα σας δοθεί ένα αντίγραφο της αναλυτικής συνέντευξης σας, ώστε να μπορείτε να σχολιάσετε και να το επεξεργαστείτε όπως επιθυμείτε. Τα δεδομένα σας θα προστατεύονται σύμφωνα με τους κανονισμούς του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου και το νόμο περί προστασίας δεδομένων. Οι μαγνητοφωνήσεις και τα αντίγραφα θα κρυπτογραφηθούν και θα αποθηκευτούν σε ένα ασφαλές σκληρό δίσκο. Οι συμμετέχοντες στην έρευνα θα κωδικοποιούνται σύμφωνα με το υπόβαθρο τους

(π.χ. κυβερνητικά στελέχη, μη-κυβερνητικοί φορείς). Το υλικό των συνεντεύξεων θα διατηρηθεί σε κρυπτογραφημένη μορφή σε ένα ασφαλές σκληρό δίσκο για 4 χρόνια μετά το τέλος της έρευνας.

Ανωνυμία

Τα δεδομένα της συνέντευξης θα διαφυλαχθούν και θα χρησιμοποιηθούν σε ανώνυμη βάση, χωρίς καμία αναφορά του ονόματος σας, αλλά θα αναφερθούμε στην ομάδα της οποίας είστε μέλος.

Συγκατάθεση

Συμφωνώ οικειοθελώς στην συμμετοχή μου και στην χρήση των δεδομένων για τους σκοπούς που αναφέρονται παραπάνω. Μπορώ να αποσύρω οποιαδήποτε στιγμή την συγκατάθεση μου ύστερα από επικοινωνία με τους ερευνητές.

ΣΗΜΕΙΩΣΤΕ ΕΔΩ: ☐

ΗΜΕΡΟΜΗΝΙΑ

Σημείωση: Τα στοιχεία επικοινωνίας σας διατηρούνται χωριστά από τα δεδομένα της συνέντευξης σας

Όνομα του ερωτώμενου:

Υπογραφή:

Email / τηλέφωνο:

Υπογραφή του ερευνητή

2 αντίγραφα πρέπει να φέρουν την υπογραφή του ερωτώμενου και του ερευνητή, ένα φυλάσσεται από τον καθένα.

